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PROLEGOMENA TO CHICANO THEOLOGY

A Dissertation
Presented to
the Faculty of the
School of Theology at Claremont

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Ministry

by
Ruben Reyes
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*has been presented to and accepted by the Faculty
of the School of Theology at Claremont in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of*

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

For more than one hundred years, or since the war called by the United States "the Mexican War," the United States has had within its borders, particularly in the southwest, a people whom this dissertation will refer to as Chicanos, though they are also referred to as Mexican-Americans. Unlike other Americans, the Chicanos, for some reason never became a part of the "melting pot." Their relationship to the United States has been a very unique one. It has created a situation of tension between Anglo and Chicano and within both groups in themselves to which theology must speak.

This dissertation then, speaks to that Chicano situation from a theological perspective. It is a theological statement seeking to answer the questions formulated within that Chicano situation.

The general nature of the situation, which is one of oppressor and oppressed, calls for a theology of liberation, but not merely the liberation of the oppressed, but also that of the oppressor.

To be more specific, this dissertation is being developed with the following more concrete goals in sight.

There is a gross misunderstanding of what the Chicano situation and the Chicano himself is. Our goal is to present a different, and at times even contrary description of the Chicano, as well as a more extensive comprehension of the Chicano situation. We also want to make

a more accurate analysis of the situation than has been made to date, and formulate the questions implied in that situation.

It is very important to note the Gospel principles at work in the Chicano movement, particularly the well known United Farm Workers' Union. This dissertation seeks to bring forth the spiritual impact of the Chavez movement on all of society.

SUBJECTIVITY

This presentation will be very subjective in regards to Chicanos, for I write from the Chicano community and culture. The conclusions arrived at in this dissertation also betray the subjectivity of the matter, since they come from the writer's own faith and self-understanding. In other words, this statement is confessional.

Paul Tillich uses the figure of the circle to deal with theology, philosophy and science. I find this figure adequate in describing the subjective situation here. I can say that I speak from within the Chicano circle, which is the Chicano community and culture; I speak from within the Chicano situation, which is interrelatedness of Chicanos and Anglos, and the theological circle, which is the basis for this study.

As this study on Chicanismo is approached, it is done using the tools that theology provides, but it is done in faith. After all, is faith not itself one of the tools of theology? Tillich seems to think so, when he says,

The theologian, quite differently, is not detached from his object but is involved in it. He looks at his object (which transcends the character of being an object) with passion, fear, and love. This is not the eros of the philosopher or his passion for objective truth; it is the love which accepts saving, and therefore personal, truth. The basic attitude of the theologian is commitment to the content he expounds. Detachment would be a denial of the very nature of this content. The attitude of the theologian is 'existential.' He is involved--with the whole of his existence with his finitude and his anxiety, with his self-contradictions and his despair, with the healing forces in him and in his social situation. Every theological statement derives its seriousness from these elements of existence. The theologian, in short, is determined by his faith. Every theology presupposes that the theologian is in the theological circle.¹

It has already been stated that this study will deal with, not only the Chicano *per se*, but the whole of society in relation to the Chicano. Let it be said at this point, that the Anglo is not involved in the Chicano situation merely by implication, but that he is a real part of it. But even within this larger circle, which includes all of society, this writer is still a very part of that subject, and even in that instance is being subjective.

I am simply saying that I am totally involved in all three circles mentioned above. I am a Chicano who has lived within the Chicano community all his life, which community has always been within the whole of society, though sometimes not recognized. As to theology, my thinking has always been in theological terms primarily, whether it was right, wrong, or indifferent. I was baptized as an infant in the United Methodist Church, and in the days when I was growing up as a Protestant our religion was a matter of ultimate concern. Consequently,

¹Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956), I, 22-23.

we thought most of the time in religious terms. But even if that were not the case, the very fact of this dissertation makes me a theologian, however poor a one I may be. So, I am involved--with the whole of my existence, with my finitude and my anxiety, with my self-contradictions and my despair, with the healing forces within myself and my social situation, which is the Chicano situation.

OBJECTIVITY

The fact that this dissertation claims to be very subjective does not in any way disclaim objectivity, for one does not necessarily exclude the other. The subjectivity mentioned and explained above is merely to make the reader understand the writer's awareness of his position and the importance of subjectivity in this type of study. In some respects this study will be very objective.

The theological scheme which will be brought to bear on the Chicano situation is from without the Chicano community. A question frequently asked in the discussion of this dissertation was what Chicano theologians would be used in the development of this statement? The answer is that there are no "Chicano theologians." The question comes up because many have thought that a Chicano is anyone who speaks Spanish, is brown, or comes from any of the Latin- or Spanish-speaking countries. The answer to the question comes from the writer's very limited definition of a Chicano. This limiting definition will be dealt with later in this dissertation; for now let it simply be said that it does not include the very well known Latin theologians who

have done some work on the theology of liberation. Though their works will be used, these writers themselves are not considered Chicanos within this dissertation's definition of Chicano.

The basic theological scheme which will be used here is Paul Tillich's theory of correlation. This will be a very general application for which the writer hopes to be forgiven if it is misunderstood by him in his application. So that even though the concerns expressed here and the content of this theology is Chicano, the theological perspective for the study comes from the time spent in the classroom and other involvements in the School of Theology at Claremont. All the elements of modern thinking and the sound theological methodology (hopefully) acquired here at the School of Theology will be used in the development of this prolegomena to Chicano theology. This is simply to say that although this study is admittedly subjective at all levels, it claims objectivity in both its method and perspective.

CHICANO STUDIES

In the last five years or so, many colleges and universities have established "Chicano Studies" or programs of one kind or another having to do with Chicanismo. Almost all colleges and universities in our particular area, perhaps even in the whole state of California, offer some kind of course or program dealing with the Chicano situation. To mention a few in the immediate area of Claremont, they include Chaffee Jr. College, Valley Jr. College, Cal-State, L.A., Cal-State, San Bernardino, University of California at Riverside, Redlands

University, etc. The different schools may have different approaches or areas of concern, but they all are speaking to the Chicano situation, which had been neglected in the past. To my knowledge, Perkins School of Theology in Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas, has just established an Hispanic Studies department to deal with the Chicano situation as an area of concern for the church. There may well be other seminaries offering such courses of which I have no knowledge. It is my firm belief that all seminaries in the Southwest should develop courses that expose all seminary students to that area of concern.

All the studies made of Chicanos have been from a sociological or anthropological viewpoint. These have been good for the identification of both the Chicano and his Anglo counterpart. Most are very good studies but some express the false myths about Chicanos which portray them in the worst light, particularly as compared to the Anglos themselves. Many of these studies have served more to degrade the Chicano than to hear his plight. These studies have been not only attempts at identity, but also attempts at solving the sociological problems of the Chicanos themselves.

There are three dissertations, all by Chicanos, in this school of theology. All three have been examined by this writer. They deal with Chicanos, or those whom the writers considered Chicanos, or those whom the writers did not want to call Chicanos but were so. Ignacio Castuera² wrote a very concise and incisive study of the influence of

²Ignacio Castuera, "Coatlicue: An Inquiry into the Causes

womanhood on Mexicans (these he calls "my people"). Elias Galvan³ in his dissertation, gives us a well documented anthropological and psychological history of the Chicano, tracing him back to Spanish and even earlier cultures on his Spanish side, and the earliest Indian tribes on his Indian side. Space does not permit a real critique on this work, but let it be said that most of Dr. Galvan's study is from the Anglo point of view. Jose Moreno Fernandez,⁴ in his dissertation, which is a history of the Hispanic United Methodist Church in Southern California and Arizona, has given us a well documented comprehensive and interpretative history of Methodism in this area. He deals in his study, in very strong terms, with the injustice of the Anglo church in dealing with the Chicano minority.

Both Galvan and Fernandez have given us, through these dissertations, some sound and viable strategies for action by both the Anglo and the Chicano church. Anyone seeking a good strategy for action would be well served by referring to these two documents, particularly to the last two chapters of Jose Fernandez's.

This dissertation is different in perspective from those above, for its perspective will be strictly theological. There will be no

of Aggression in the Mexican Culture" (Unpublished Rel.D. Dissertation, School of Theology at Claremont, 1971).

³Elias Galvan, "A Study of the Spanish Speaking Protestant Church and Her Mission to the Mexican-American Minority" (Unpublished Rel.D. Dissertation, School of Theology at Claremont, 1969).

⁴Jose Moreno Fernandez, "A History of the Hispanic Methodist Church in Southern California and Arizona" (Unpublished Rel.D. Dissertation, School of Theology at Claremont, 1973).

immediate or practical solutions to problems. Perhaps in the final analysis more problems will emerge, for theological answers are not synonymous with solutions to problems. No doubt we are in great need of practical solutions to the many problems that emerge daily in the Chicano situation. But my contention is that we have been so involved in meeting immediate problems in all areas in the church, that we have neglected to seek answers where churchmen should always seek them, that is in God's revelation. The answers the church has given to the questions raised, have been many times, sorely lacking in theological content. I hope to bring to the Chicano situation, a theological perspective.

Although there are no actual Chicano theologies, much has been written in other countries and here in the United States from an Hispanic point of view and by Hispanics. One very significant work among these is Gustavo Gutierrez's *A Theology of Liberation*. Gutierrez' work as well as others, particularly from Latin America where liberation is a predominant issue for the church, are very relevant to the issue discussed here and are used to reinforce, support, inspire or confirm this theology. These works, however, are addressed to situations which are in many ways different than the Chicano situation. The difference may be merely the specificity of the Chicano situation, but nonetheless a difference.

Much has been written also from the Black community, for which I am very grateful and which is even more relevant than the Latin theologies of liberation, since the "oppressor" in the Black situation

is the same one as in the Chicano situation. Both are also minorities within the same borders and under the same government. The Chicano situation has more in common with the Blacks than it does with other Latin countries, including Mexico. This theology would not have been attempted, had Cone's *A Black Theology of Liberation* and *Black Theology and Black Power* not been read. These two books were a tremendous source of inspiration. They pointed me to the very center of my own situation and the need for formulating a Chicano theology.

To my knowledge, and that of colleagues and fellow students consulted, the type of theological study pursued here has not been done in regard to Chicanismo. There may be many reasons for this, but I will only mention two: (1) One is simply that this group has been totally neglected by our seminaries and consequently there has been no interest or demand for this type of contribution, as there has been none for contributions in other areas. It must be stated here that this has been changing lately, particularly in areas other than theology. (2) The second reason for the absence of a Chicano theology is the limited circle here identified as Chicanos. Any study of this type would be a very local, perhaps even provincial work dealing with a relatively small segment of society here in the United States.

Let it be said, however, that in spite of the above, to our locale, to the Southwest, or more specifically to California, this study is a necessity. The definition of Chicano in the next chapter will deal with the latter statement in more detail.

DIFFERENCES FROM OTHER STUDIES

There are many aspects of this study which will differ from those done to date on the Chicano. This has become very clear as the topic has been discussed with colleagues, fellow students and friends. They all seemed to be expecting something different than what the writer was proposing. The approach used, and the issues raised, are not those which are usually discussed when dealing with the Chicano situation. The claim for uniqueness has already been made above. Now we must point to those areas in the study which have a different approach or point of view.

The Perspective Itself

One very apparent point of difference in other studies of the Chicano situation is the perspective itself. This is a theological perspective, in contrast to, at times, but many times complementary to, most of the works to date, which have been from an anthropological, sociological or psychological perspective. Perhaps in the end, this theological perspective may be lost, but the attempt is to bring about this different and necessary dimension, which is not found in other studies on Chicanos.

An Existential Approach

A second point of variance with most Chicano studies is in the very existential nature of this particular study, for we are taking the Chicano at the point where he is right now. There is no attempt

here to trace the history or ancestry of the Chicano or the factors in that history and ancestry which have brought him to his present state. Others have done this and have done an adequate job of it. Others have also given us adequate statistical data. This statement will have a minimum of statistics if any at all. If this be construed as a lack of concern in that area, let it merely be said that this approach does not require that type of input. Anyone seeking that type of data can find an overabundance of it, he can be sure. As a person, and more so as a Chicano, I am weary of statistics and statistical reports on Chicanos.

There is a very sound reason behind this rejection of statistics and scientific studies, be they anthropological, psychological or whatever. The reason is that more often than not, what happens in these profound studies of the Chicano is that he is linked to one history, or people, or ancestry or another until all that is left of him is the linkages. The Chicano today is lost in all this historical or ancestral researching and studying. Many times, these studies have left the real Chicano more forgotten than ever.

The Chicano we are dealing with in this statement, the one of consequence here, is the one who at this moment stands within a very unique culture--a culture which has many unanswered questions, but also many unproclaimed proclamations. The history of that Chicano is short, but his situation at this point is wealthy with both questions and answers which this study seeks to bring forth and correlate with answers from the Christian message.

Limited Scope of this Chicano Definition

A third variance of this study from others is the particularity of the group here called Chicano. By this understanding of Chicano are excluded many persons normally considered a part of the Chicano culture, by both Hispanics and Anglos. This study considers the true Chicanos as those who are of Mexican descent but who were born and raised in the United States, or who were born in Mexico but have spent the greater part of their lives in the United States. These are the "manitos" of New Mexico, the Texas "Tex Mex," the "pochos" of California and those in Arizona and Colorado by whatever name they are called. The following chapter will explain this limited identification of Chicanos. At this point, we are merely showing our variance from other studies which include a much wider segment of society.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

There are certain terms, which will make for an easier reading of the dissertation if defined at this point. For the most part terms will be defined as we develop our topic. Perhaps there will be duplication in the definitions here, but this part of the dissertation will serve as a reference at any time a term is not understood.

Chicano

Chicano is one who was born in the United States but of Mexican descent, or one who having been born in Mexico, has been raised and spent most of his life in the United States.

Chicanismo

Chicanismo is simply "Chicano-ism" in Spanish.

Chicano Circle

The Chicano circle is basically the Chicano community, but includes also Chicano thinking and movement.

Hispanic

Hispanic is one who either speaks the Spanish language, or is a native of a Spanish-speaking country or a descendent of persons from Spanish-speaking countries.

Mexican-American

Mexican-American, as far as this dissertation is concerned, will be used synonymously with Chicano.

Anglo

Anglo is used here to designate the predominant society in the United States as over against the Mexican minority.

White

White is used synonymously with Anglo. Perhaps the use of "White" is even more accurate in describing those referred to with either one of the above designations.

THE THEOLOGICAL METHOD

It has already been mentioned above, though in another context, that this theology will use the method of correlation in its development. Paul Tillich holds that this is the true method for theology. He claims that "Systematic Theology uses the method of correlation." He then describes the method of correlation:

In using the method of correlation, systematic theology proceeds in the following way: it makes an analysis of the human situation out of which the existential questions arise, and it demonstrates that the symbols used in the Christian message are the answers to these questions.⁵

In developing this theology we shall first describe the Chicano and his plight. Then the situation will be described and analyzed formulating the questions from within the situation itself. Once the questions are formulated the answers are sought in the symbols used in the Christian message. Tillich also points out that "The method of correlation explains the content of the Christian faith through existential questions and theological answers in mutual interdependence."⁶ Thus as we develop our Chicano theology we shall seek the answers from the Christian message but as they are forged within the Chicano situation.

⁵Paul Tillich, I, 62.

⁶*Ibid.*, I, 60.

SOURCES

Personal Experience

As can be seen from the statement on subjectivity, personal experience will be our main source, particularly in the area of description of the Chicano, the situation, and in the formulating of the questions. Forty-eight years within the Chicano community (for the most part) and in the "bosom of the Church," so to speak, are to my credit in such an extensive use of personal experience. To my disadvantage is the fact that I did not experience that part of our culture which has been so influential to the Chicano people--the Roman Catholic Church. The predominance of Catholicism all around me in the Chicano community, more than made up for this deficiency, however, with credits or debits this dissertation will make extensive use of personal experience, as well as of material learned and assimilated, whose sources have long been forgotten.

The Huelga

Through a direct involvement with Caesar Chavez in the "Huelga" (strike) movement in Delano and other parts of the state of California, much firsthand information and experience was gained to the point that proper claim can be made for authenticity as a well-informed and experienced Chicano in that particular Chicano situation. During my time spent with the Farm Workers movement, there were conversations with Caesar himself, with Dolores Huerta, with Caesar's brother Manuel

and other members of the movement which will be drawn upon in the formulation of this statement.

Rodolfo Gonzales

Rodolfo Gonzales, a Chicano raised in Colorado, has written a poem which is without equal in the Chicano culture. *Yo Soy Joaquin* (I am Joaquin) is the title of it and it is now in print. It will, of course be a part of our bibliography, but it is mentioned here because to this writer it has been much more than a document for research or study. It has been an object of great inspiration which has contributed much hope and courage. It will be used extensively, in the description of the Chicano particularly.

Other Sources

There are a number of works on Chicanos from different perspectives. These will be listed in the bibliography. The Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments will be used. Finally, but perhaps most important for this study, are the works of Paul Tillich, particularly his three volumes on systematic theology.

STRUCTURE

This statement will consist of two parts and seven chapters. The first chapter is an introduction after which follow the two chapters in the first part which have to do with the question formulation. Chapter 2, then will be a definition of the Chicano and Chapter 3 a

description and analysis of what the writer considers the "Chicano situation."

The second part of this dissertation will be introduced briefly with Chapter 4 which will be followed by two chapters dealing with answers to the questions implied in the first part. Chapter 5 which follows the brief introductions will be on "Answers from Chicanismo" and the final chapter, or Chapter 6, will be explicit theological answers.

PART I

THE QUESTIONS

Chapter 2

WHO IS THE CHICANO?

The question as to who the Chicano is, is one that must be raised, not merely because of its importance to this study in particular, but also because of its tremendous importance to those of us who live in the Southwestern part of the United States and our inevitable relationship to the Chicano. He who lives in this area, and does not have some kind of knowledge of the Chicano, is missing out on a vital part of his social and cultural experience. The Chicano is a very vital part of our social, political and cultural life in this part of the United States. It is for this reason that many, at least in the last ten years or so, have written so much about the Chicano. Much of the material that some might have read may well call him by a different name, for many are the names given to him. He is known, and sometimes calls himself by the different names of Mexican-American, Latin-American, Spanish-American or Hispanic. All these names are correct and have a reason for being. The group that this dissertation is addressed to and is about, however, the name Mexican-American comes the closest to describing. The writer prefers the term Chicano for his description of this group, for reasons which have already been stated in the introduction.

THE NAME

Not an Anglo Term

The term "Chicano" is offensive to many Mexican-Americans, but

not because it was ever used by the Anglo in a derogatory manner toward us. It has never been the counterpart of "Nigger." The counterpart of "Nigger" in relation to the Chicano is "Meskin." There are many other names given by the Anglo which are derogatory such as "Greaser," but "Meskin" is the most widely used. It is well to note here that both "Nigger" and "Meskin" are mispronunciations of the ignorant and uneducated. As is well known, the proper names are "Negro" and "Mexican." The term "Mexican," even properly pronounced is the wrong designation of a Chicano or a Mexican-American for it makes him a native of Mexico, which he is not. "Chicano" is the Mexican-American's own designation of himself. It is a very "Mejicano" term with which the Anglo has had nothing to do other than use it in referring to Mexican-Americans.

Mechicano

"Chicano" is short for "mechicano," which is the diminutive, or a diminutive of "Mejicano." "Mejicano" is "Mexican" in Spanish. The use of the diminutive is very common in the Spanish language and particularly among Chicanos. For the most part, however, the diminutive is used in an endearing or loving way. When Chicanos refer to a black man or woman, for instance, they do not say "el negro" or "la negra." They say: "el negrito" or "la negrita." The first song in almost any mariachi's repertoire is "Negrita de Mis Amores." The title translated means "Little Black Woman of My Love." It is to a dark complexioned young girl. The term "negrito" and "negrita" is very commonly used

between husband and wife in the Chicano community. So that when "Mechicano" was used for "Mejicano" it was in no way derogatory. Even the name of God is used in the diminutive by the Chicanos, or all Hispanics, for that matter. It is very common, particularly in parent-child talk, to use the word "Diosito" (little God). So the "Mechicano" became "Chicano" and that name has been kept, as the Chicano's own self-designation.

COMMON MYTHS ABOUT CHICANOS

The person who would know the real Chicano, must rid his mind of the many myths which have been perpetrated by the Anglo-American concerning these people. And these myths are legion. Many such myths are not necessarily the kind that are made up in social gatherings or the cocktail lounge. There are those which are presented in scholarly fashion and with at least apparently sound documentation. Nevertheless, these myths are wrong. They cannot be tolerated, even under the guise of scholarship. They must be disclaimed.

Glen Gaviglio in "The Mutual Images and Expectations of Anglo-Americans and Mexican-Americans" lists these as: the myth of the border, the myth of the docile peasant, the myth of ethnic and racial assimilation, and the myth of Mexican-American similarity.¹ Gaviglio gives no credence to these, but rather refutes them.

¹Glen Gaviglio, "The Myths of the Mexican-American," in Livie Isauro Duran and H. Russell Bernard, *Introduction to Chicano Studies* (New York: Macmillan, 1973), p. 399.

The Myth of the Border

According to Gaviglio, the border has never really existed for the Chicano. He says that the difference between Calexico and Mexicali, El Paso and Juarez, and Brownsville and Matamoros is economic and political, not geographical. "No Chicano is really an immigrant in America," says Gaviglio. He claims that the Delano movement has not succeeded because of this. Migrant workers can enter both legally and illegally. He concludes the border myth by saying that, "In reality, the border has always been exactly what the United States has wanted it to be."²

The Myth of the Docile Peasant

The Anglo-American has always claimed that all Mexicans are by nature passive peasants. In other words; they are people who take life easy. They can be characterized by the sleeper with his big hat under the cactus tree or poking along with his donkey at the donkey's pace, oblivious of the passing of time. They like the life of the peasant. They have no ambitions like the progressive hard-working typical American--the Anglo-American. All this, of course, is not true, though even some Mexican-Americans themselves have accepted this as a true description of a typical Chicano. To a large extent these myths propounded by the Anglo-American have, more often than we wish, become self-fulfilling prophecies, since the power of their proof lies

²*Ibid.*

ultimately with the Anglo. Gaviglio says:

These stereotypes are extremely important because people act upon these myths. Very insipid and disastrous self-fulfilling prophecies can be initiated by racial and cultural myths. If the dominant group treats the minority group as an inferior race or culture the minority can become just that.³

This is why, as was mentioned above, many Chicanos have been convinced that they are "inferior." For the poor and the outcast, it has not taken much convincing. But even some of the more sophisticated Chicanos have been led to believe this. For the sophisticated, of course, the arguments are couched in more intellectual terms and within more scholarly done anthropological and sociological studies. But the effect is the same, and the attitude of the Anglo remains the same toward the Mexican-American. Gaviglio asks the question: "Is being passive, accepting and fatalistic much different from being lazy?"⁴

The Myth of Ethnic and Racial Assimilation

Ethnic and racial assimilation might have worked for some other groups. It never worked for the Chicano. Assimilation was "for Whites only." The Blacks were slaves; the Indians were virtually exterminated and the Chicanos were kept only as the labor force. The reason for the non-assimilation of the Chicano has been the Anglo himself. It was never the desire of the Anglo that the Chicano be on an equal basis with him. But there is another reason for this non-assimilation which may be even stronger; that is that the Chicano might simply not have wanted to assimilate. He had a fully developed culture

³ *Ibid.*, p. 402.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 403.

which could be traced to two very powerful and proud cultures of the past--the Indian on the one hand and the Spaniard on the other. The fact is, however, that those Chicanos who tried to assimilate were rejected.

The Myth of Mexican-American Similarity

No doubt that there are traits common to all Mexican-Americans, but by and large there is as much variety from section to section of the country and background to background as there is with any other group. Perhaps there is even more. There is no such thing as knowing one to know them all. I have had the privilege of living in several parts of the country and for the most part I have lived within the Chicano community. As I have moved from one community to the other the differences are so great that at times it was difficult to adjust. Within the state of Texas itself, as I moved from the Eastern part, around San Antonio, to the Western part, near and around El Paso, the Spanish spoken in one and the other sections was very different. It was different enough for certain words to be complimentary in one area and derogatory in the other. The word "corriente" (common), for example, in Crystal City virtually meant a person of bad repute. In Alpine and Marfa it meant popular. The vocabulary, the accent in speaking, the customs, are all different in different areas. Within a group itself there are innumerable customs and ideas. A very popular saying in Spanish when one cannot understand another person's viewpoint is "cada cabeza es un mundo." The meaning of that phrase is that

every head has its own world within itself.

Even from a physical standpoint there is wide diversity among Chicanos. Though they tend to be on the darker side--brown as they are called sometimes--their color varies from black to very light complexioned to blond. So let us put the myth to rest that Chicanos are all alike.

Machismo

The myths mentioned above are less common and even somewhat unconscious. But there are those which are very common and at least one of them is a very part of our everyday language. I am referring to "machismo."

The word "machismo" is derived from "macho." "Macho" simply means "male." Machismo, then, simply means male-ism. It is a strong emphasis on the male member of the family--the father, the husband, etc. The common understanding of machismo is that it has to do more with sex. One who believes he is "muy macho" is one who among other things, must have many stories of his sexual exploits to recount. But he must also have great physical strength and endurance.

This machismo is one concept which is not difficult to explain, because it has become very much a part of the existing sociological and psychological lingo. But the very fact that the term and the concept that goes with it have been taken over and are used quite frequently by the Anglo (not very often relating to Chicano matters) attests to its universality. Maleness, "Machismo," or the desire for the

dominance of the male in the man-woman relationship is not an experience unique to the Chicano. From what little I know of counseling and within my limited experience firsthand, I have learned that there are more problems related to this "machismo" or the lack of it, among Anglos, than I know elsewhere. No, it is not true. Not every male Chicano is overly preoccupied with whether he is coming through as a man or not. The Chicano also likes to excel intellectually. There are those Chicanos who are very "hen-pecked." There are those Chicano families in which the mother is the big boss. She, like the lioness, roars, and everybody trembles. "Machismo" is another myth we must lay to rest.

Incapability for Self-Determination

Elias Galvan,⁵ in his dissertation, claims with much documentation that one characteristic of the Mexican-American is that he feels he is incapable of governing himself, that he always must have outsiders to govern him. My brother has been misguided and has accepted that myth. All we need to say in rebuttal is that the modern political scene on the local, state, and national level with all the Spanish surnames in the rosters of the governing bodies attest not only to the Chicano's ability to govern himself, to his self-determination, but also of his ability to govern (period).

⁵Elias Galvan, "A Study of the Spanish Speaking Protestant Church and Her Mission to the Mexican-American Minority" (Unpublished Rel.D. Dissertation, School of Theology at Claremont, 1969).

In conclusion of this attempt at disclaiming all these myths, let it just be stated that the Chicano painted in them is not the real Chicano but a mythological one. Having said that, we must now continue to attempt a more true description, or perhaps even identification of the Chicano.

THE CHICANO EXPERIENCE

Although we have disclaimed many stereotypes of the Chicano and have sought to show his diversity and universality, there are those common elements which make of the Chicanos one people. We do have identifying traits common to all Chicanos. These, however, are mostly in the realm of experience. What makes us Chicanos, then, is the Chicano experience. What makes us different from the Anglo and other peoples is not machismo, or pride, or inferiority, or superiority, ancestral background or geography. It is our existing situation. It is our response to that situation in which we live in all its experiences.

The Underdog

One experience common to all those conscious of their Chicanismo is that of being an underdog. This experience is not foreign to anyone as an individual, but the American people have never experienced it as a nation or community as the Chicano has.

As many Mexican-Americans have become a part of the mainstream of society and live more the part of affluent Americans, they shun the

name Chicano and consider it degrading. Rodolfo Gonzales, better known as Corky Gonzales, in his famous poem, "Yo Soy Joaquin" describes all types of Chicano experiences through his "Joaquin." Thus, says Joaquin, the speaker in the story,

I look at myself
and see part of me
who rejects my father and my mother
and dissolves into the melting pot
to disappear in shame.
I sometimes
sell my brother out
and reclaim him
for my own when society gives me
token leadership
in society's own name.⁶

The Rio Grande Conference of the United Methodist Church, which is a Mexican-American Conference covering the states of Texas, New Mexico and Arkansas expressed this sentiment. In their annual session, June 5-8, 1971, the word Chicano was used in presenting a social concerns report. The word "Chicano" was voted out of the report and had to be changed before the report was accepted.⁷

Livie Isauro Duran and Russell Bernard say that there are many writers, including Chicanos, whose political sensitivities and works are in agreement with the principle of self-determination but who prefer to use the term Mexican-American because of their dislike for "Chicano."⁸ The writer does not consider the objection to the term

⁶Rodolfo Gonzales, *I am Joaquin* (New York: Bantam, 1972) p. 52.

⁷"Daily Proceeding (Minuta Diaria) Sesion Quinta," in *Actas Oficiales De La Conferencia Anual Rio Grande De La Iglesia Metodists Unida, Cuadragesima Segunda Sesion, Junio 5-8, 1971*, p. 27.

⁸Duran and Bernard, p. 6.

Chicano bad or a "sell out," or outrageous, as many Chicanos do. The objection to "Chicano" as a self-designation is not only understandable but justifiable. It is however, most descriptive because of the very reasons for its rejection.

"The most common resistance to, and rejection of the word Chicano," says Frank Sifuentes, "comes from Mexicanos (Mexicans) who say that it defines and identifies one as being of the lower class,..."⁹ In other words, those of us who accept and adopt the name Chicano as our own self-designation, self-determination if you please, are simply accepting a reality. The hard reality, of course, is that we are in effect the underdog. But we are also the lowly. We are in the category of those to whom St. Paul said,

For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble.

But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty (I Cor. 1:26-7).¹⁰

To Frank Sifuentes, it is this state of being, being the underdog, which has forged Chicanismo into modern consciousness. He says,

It is a state of ultimate concern that is profoundly social and religious . . . for it means in a real sense that the last shall be first and the meek shall inherit the earth. Como el Negro, like the Black Man, who silently and with constant uncertainty carried the image of the beauty of his blackness, who finally began to glorify and appreciate his blackness, who

⁹Frank Sifuentes, "Notes on the Search for the Chicano Identity" (mimeographed), p. 2.

¹⁰I Corinthians 1:26-7.

can now say: 'Black is Beautiful and always has been,' so too the Chicano finds pride and dignity in his Chicanismo, in his Mexicanismo, in his humble origins, . . .¹¹

The Chicano, since he is the underdog is the one easiest to ignore, even forget. He is the last man on the totem pole. A Federal Commission on Education has just discovered after an extensive study, that the Mexican-American is indeed discriminated against in our public schools in the state of California. The educational program of the public school system never addressed itself to the real idiosyncracies of its subjects, the Chicanos, even in those areas where they predominated, for schools have been segregated either de-facto or de-jure all through our history in the United States. The Chicano could have had a special curriculum geared to his special needs, but it was easier to just lose him in the system--forget him.

When it comes to employment, it was a known fact up until very recently, that the Chicano was given the lowliest of jobs. Worse even, for many years, and where possible it is still happening, the Chicano was paid less than the Anglo for the same job. It is the feeling of this writer that part of the lack of success in the farm workers union being recognized is that its majority is Chicano. The Anglo does not regard him as of any great consequence. His needs do not require the same as an Anglo worker's.

When we turn to politics, the political system has so ignored the Chicano, that he has felt it necessary to form a third party. This writer does not approve of having that third party, La Raza Unida,

¹¹Sifuentes, p. 3.

although it had its origin in his own home town, Crystal City, Texas. But La Raza Unida party attests to the feeling of rejection, and political desperation of the Chicano. It must be mentioned here, that of late there has been an increase in the election of officials both locally and at the state level. There has been a small increase nationally also. But even after all the progress we have seen in the political scene regarding the Chicano, more often than not, he is the loser.

Factors in the Formation of the Chicano Consciousness

Having discounted (hopefully) the myths on the Chicano image and accepted the fact that he has been throughout his history and remains today the underdog, let us examine those experiences common to all Chicanos which are the main factors in the formation of the Chicano consciousness. I simply wish to present three such experiences. These are: (1) a conquered people, (2) a countryless people, and (3) an angry people.

As was said in the introduction, this study limits the name Chicano to those whose total life has been spent here in these United States, those who have experienced the tension of the Anglo and Mexican cultures within them, those who have seen their loved ones live and die in and for this country. No Chicano family has been left untouched by the losses of World War II or the shame and senseless killings of the Vietnam experience. Joaquín, the speaker in Rodolfo Gonzales' poem says,

My blood runs pure on the ice-caked
hills of the Alaskan isles,
on the corpse-strewn beach of Normandy,
the foreign land of Korea

and now
Vietnam.¹²

Let no one conclude from the above remarks that we totally discount our Hispanic brothers and sisters from other countries, particularly our Mexican brother and sister. Nor do we discount the continuity of the blood of our forefathers flowing through the centuries to reach us where we are today. We love and are proud of our past. To quote Rodolfo Gonzales again in introducing his poem, he says, " . . . the sounds of movement, the literary and anthropological quest for our roots, the renewal of a fierce pride and tribal unity, are the reasons why *I am Joaquin* had to be shared with all my hermanos y hermanas, fathers, mothers and grandparents. Their time and now our time, could not be left behind and forgotten."¹³

We do want to make it clear that the Chicano we are considering is one who has certain traits derived not from his ancestry or origin, but from the experience of which he has been a part. This is the point at which certain groups, which others have considered Chicanos, are excluded. It must be understood, however, that the intention is not so much exclusion of any group as it is an affirmation of that group which has always been ignored and even forgotten. These I call the real Chicanos. Those who have recently migrated to the United

¹²Gonzales, p. 62.

¹³*Ibid.*, p. 1.

States, and particularly those who have chosen to renounce their country, Mexico, and become U. S. citizens, become such by choice and consequently are a part of an experience different to the one of that group that this dissertation wishes to deal with. These Chicanos all have been or are a part of the experiences mentioned above, which we shall now discuss in more detail.

A conquered people. The experience of the Chicano has been that of a conquered people. The war of 1846-48, which is known here as the Mexican War, in Mexico is known as "La Invasion Americana" (The American Invasion). Even here, today, the Chicano movement joins with Mexico in that assessment of the "Mexican War." There are those zealous Chicanos who would like to see California, Arizona, New Mexico and Texas (perhaps other territories that the writer is ignorant of) returned to Chicano domination. I do not subscribe to that thinking or movement. It is mentioned merely to show the reality of the experience of the conquered.

Rodolfo Acuna has developed the thesis that the Mexican-American (Chicano) communities in the United States were actually colonies of the United States and that the only difference in the status of said communities and other colonies is merely geographical. That is, that these particular colonies are within the boundaries of the United States, as over against those which are outside of the United States. He says,

I maintain that colonialism in the traditional sense did exist in the southwest, and that the conquerors dominated and exploited the conquered.

The colonization still exists today, but as I mentioned before, there are variations. Anglo-Americans still exploit and manipulate Mexicans and still relegate them to a submerged caste. Mexicans are still denied political and economic determination and are still victims of stereotypes and racial slurs promulgated by those who feel they are superior. Thus I contend that Mexicans in the United States are still a colonized people, but now the colonization is internal--it is occurring within the country rather than being imposed by an external power. The territories of the Southwest are States within the United States, and theoretically permanent residents of Mexican extraction are U.S. citizens. Yet the rights of citizenship are too often circumvented or denied outright.¹⁴

Acuna is convinced that there is no great difference in the status of the Chicano of the nineteenth century traditional colony and the internal colony of today. The relationship between the Anglo-American and the Mexican-American (Chicano) is the same; one of master and servant. What difference there does exist is that in the traditional colony, you had Mexicans who were indigenous to the area. In a sense they were more literally a "conquered people." Now, while there are many of us still indigenous to the areas and descendants of Mexicans living in the area before the conquest, large numbers are descendants of immigrants. In 1910, because of conditions in Mexico, almost one-eighth of Mexico's population migrated to the United States. Most of these migrants left Mexico because of economic conditions. Agri-business in the United States was at a point where it could use all the cheap labor it could get. This new influx of Mexicans signaled the beginning of even greater manipulation of the Mexican by the Anglo. Although these migrants had not in effect been conquered, they

¹⁴Rodolfo Acuna, *Occupied America* (San Francisco: Canfield Press, 1972), p. 4.

increased the power of the conqueror, for to the Anglo they represented, not human beings but a labor force--literally, more power to them (the Anglos). The Anglos now had more and larger colonias (colonies) to control. These colonias Mejicanas (Mexican colonies), as they were literally called by the Mexicans themselves, had little or no control over their political, economic, or educational destinies. "In almost every case" says Acuna,

. . . they remained separate and unequal to Anglo-American communities. The elected representatives within the colonias were usually Anglo-Americans or Mexicans under their control, and they established a bureaucracy to control the political life of the Mexican settlements--for the benefit of the Anglo privileged.¹⁵

There are other elements in the Chicano situation which would lead anyone to the same conclusions as those of Acuna, the main one being that we are in effect a conquered, or to use Acuna's term, colonized people. All the institutions which are attendant on the development of a people, in the case of the Mexican-American were used to continue in perpetuity the relationship of master-servant, between the Anglo and the Mexican-American.

The police who must protect, above all else, the rights of individuals and groups, in Anglo-Chicano relations have always adequately protected the rights of the Anglo at the expense of the Chicano. The presence of the police in a Chicano barrio, to the Chicano at least, means that he is there, not to protect the rights or property of the Chicano, but to protect society from the Chicano.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, pp. 4-5.

When the police force enters the barrio there are no rights of privacy or protest of any kind. One incident that shows this very clearly took place at Plaza Community Center in East Los Angeles. This incident was never recorded or mentioned in the news media. The writer knows of such an incident because he was able to interview some of the witnesses.

The incident happened during the year 1970 on a day during early afternoon, or late morning. The police (Sheriff's deputies) stormed into the front office, guns drawn and ready to shoot. There was no warning of any kind from the police department or anyone in authority. Deputies proceeded to go through all the rooms, including the day-care center which has a group of some 75 pre-school children. One of the teachers asked one of the deputies to please be careful that he not scare the children. The deputy replied telling her to go and a four-letter word. As I understand, there was later an apology from the Sheriff and a promise of an investigation. It was found out that they had raided the wrong place. That was established before they left the center, but no apology was offered then. But even if an apology had been offered, the question which remains is if this would have happened anywhere else other than a colonia Mexicana.

The deficiencies of our school system in reference to Chicanos has already been discussed, but there are those who think that the school system has not so much been defective, but that it has been very effective on behalf of the Anglo and his continued control of the destinies of Chicanos. Frank Sifuentes says in regards to this:

. . . the most carefully planned and religiously executed forms of anti-Mexicanismo was best expressed by the school marms and school administrators who were armed with all the English educational philosophies, with the proud and tenacious English tongue; who after years of study in colleges had learned to transmit the English language into the minds of the Mexican Pagans, who pounded English into our minds or seduced us into accepting it as the true language of God; and consequently shoved English, white-man's burden and American manifest-destiny down our young and innocent throats.¹⁶

The one goal of the educational system was to Americanize the Mexican, but only to the extent that his development would not go beyond service to the Anglo.

So the Chicanos have been, for all practical purposes, conquered, useful subjects to the utilitarian Anglo. Dr. Nanez, in a very natural way describes the Chicano as the conquered when he says that "for four generations in the southwest, the descendants of the Mexicans have received the scorn and oppression of the conquerer."¹⁷ This is to say that the spirit of colonization, the relationship of conqueror and conquered, remains to this day, although perhaps less conscious or open.

A people without a country. A very real psychological factor in the forming of the Chicano consciousness has been to experience being "The man without a country." Edward E. Hale in a preface to his book *The Man Without a Country*, in response to speculation on the real existence of such a one as the hero of the story, or the man without a country, says: "My hero is a purely imaginary character.

¹⁶Sifuentes, p. 7.

¹⁷"Dos Guerras, Un Hombre," in *Actas Oficiales* . . . , p. 118.

The critics are right in saying that not only there never was such a man, but there never could have been such a man."¹⁸ Hale was referring more to there being such a man as would renounce his country with such hostility. He was talking of another time and other circumstances, for it does not seem at all impossible within the political climate of today. There are those today who have experienced countrylessness, though contrary to Phillip Nolan, through no fault of their own. The Chicano is not a person without a country in actuality, but he is such a person psychologically. In relation to his country, which is the United States, the Chicano has felt rejected. There are many, particularly Chicanos, who believe that this rejection is the reason for Chicanos fighting harder and being more heroic than any other ethnic group in the United States armed services. It was believed, feeling as step-children, that giving so much, risking life itself for this country would bring the recognition as real native sons, which the Chicanos actually are. Even the Chicano blood spilled in Normandy, Japan, Vietnam, Korea did not change the status of the Chicano in the United States. The experience was even more traumatic then, for Chicanos finally realized that not even the very lives of our very own, given for this country, did not make us full citizens. Our citizen's rights, in fact were real only to the extent that these would not interfere with the desires of the Anglo.

¹⁸Edward Everett Hale, *The Man Without a Country* (Cambridge: University Press, 1900), p. 13.

As far as Mexico is concerned, many of us never even stepped in that country until our adult lives. Like other Americans we have gone there as tourists and foreigners, merely to visit. So the admonition we so often hear--"go home 'Spic,' 'Greaser,' 'Wetback,' or 'Taco Bender'"--is incorrect, to say the least, for our home is none other than the United States. Glen Gaviglio says that "when an Anglo tells a Chicano to go home, he is less than amusing; he is grossly misinformed. The Chicano is more firmly rooted in the American past than an Anglo who may have just recently migrated from Europe."¹⁹

For the Chicano simply to go back to Mexico where he "came from" is not as simple as all that. To begin with, the majority of us Chicanos did not come from Mexico, so that we could not return to where we did not come from. So what has happened to the Chicano as he is told to "go home to Mexico," has been to experience the most profound and anxious state of being; that of being without a country, for Mexico in a sense rejects him also. The native Mexican considers the Mexican-American inferior. In this way both United States and Mexico reject him. The situation of the Chicano becomes even more grave when the United States favors the native of Mexico against the Mexican-American.

Perhaps it is this rejection which makes the Chicano vulnerable to the alternative of the Jehovah's witnesses--the refusal to salute the flag. This sets the individual over and above country, in this case, the country which has rejected him already. He becomes

¹⁹Gaviglio, p. 400.

a citizen of a higher kingdom, which is beyond this country. It is not my intention to discuss the Jehovah's witnesses' theology here, but to point to its tempting offer in the face of rejection from one's own country; and to emphasize the vulnerability of the one rejected. Perhaps it is an attempt also to justify the more violent reactions of Chicanos.

Undoubtedly one of the elements in the formation of the Chicano psyche today, has been this experience of countrylessness; for a man must have a country, a flag to be loyal to; but it must be one that also protects him and in return for his loyalty rewards him with personhood, dignity and honor. The Chicano feels that the latter have been denied to him, though the former has been his conduct. So, who am I? asks Chicano, Oscar Perez. His answer follows:

I've always thought I was a proud American. After all, I killed Japs in my backyard when I was a kid, I hit home runs in Yankee Stadium, I went fishing with Tom Sawyer, I ate turkey on Thanksgiving.

That all seems like a long time ago. The red, white and blue have faded like my past. And the dreams which I saw in the stars have turned into little black empty pits. The chills I once felt whenever I heard the Star Spangled Banner have turned to chills of hate. The open hand I once placed over my heart has now taken the shape of a closed fist and is raised in protest above my head. I am no longer American, then what am I? I am literally a bastard child, I have no parents. I am trying to reconcile the conflicts of my history, and I am trying to find my place in the sun my forebearers once worshipped as a god.

Below the foundations of our Spanish culture, I sense the ruins of a civilization never before seen. I am not European, that is obvious. I have Spanish life with Indian contradictions.²⁰ What am I? Call me CHICANO for that, hermano, is what I am.

²⁰Oscar "Tuchi" Perez, "Who Are We?" *La Voz De Aztlan*, (1970), I:2.

An angry people. The end product of oppression, rejection, prejudice and discrimination is anger; in this case an angry Chicano. The anger of the Chicano has been suppressed, though not always completely, both inwardly and outwardly. The inward suppression is to the Chicano's credit, for it shows his stoicism, his patience and tolerance. The outward suppression is to the discredit of the Anglo for his cruel and unjust methods used to keep the Chicano inhibited and docile.

It has not been easy for the Chicano to suppress his anger in the face of so much injustice. But at the same time, it has been such a great risk to express it that the Chicano chose to endure the injustices of those who were in power. To this day, the Chicano who expresses anger or disgust at government or law officers, does so at peril to his life. As unbelievable as it may seem, in this day and time many murders are still committed under the guise of "law and order" against the Chicano. An example of this was the death of Ruben Salazar, Chicano reporter of some renown, in August of 1970 in the Silver Dollar, a bar on Whittier Street in the Chicano area of East Los Angeles. Salazar was shot with a tear gas shell as he sat in this bar with some friends, after the events following a "Chicano Moratorium" demonstration in the same East Los Angeles. The Chicano Moratorium was a protest against the excessive number of Chicanos being killed in Vietnam. The police department claimed that the death of Salazar was accidental, and, of course, were completely exonerated. There was not even found a misuse of arms, or negligence or any other

charge that could have easily been sustained, even if the death was an accident. No self-respecting Chicano in East Los Angeles today believes that Salazar's death was accidental. The Chicano knows, or at least feels with a certainty worse than truth itself, that Ruben Salazar was executed, perhaps not by premeditation, but at least by the use of the circumstances which lent themselves to silence a very angry American--a Chicano. Ruben Salazar had become very involved and was one of the most vocal defenders of the Chicano cause.

Today, in spite of the fact that things such as the Ruben Salazar incident can and will happen, the anger of the Chicano has surfaced. The real Chicano has now awakened and, summoning all that courage which is in him, is showing his anger and his outrage and his righteous indignation. In his anger, the Chicano can identify with the Black man, and according to James Baldwin, "to be a Negro in this country and to be relatively conscious is to be in rage almost all the time."²¹ It is my contention, that to be a Chicano, and conscious of your Chicanismo is to be angry most of the time.

We know that no human being can have any kind of meaningful life without responding to the forces that attend that life. The only adequate response to the forces that surround the Chicano, which are discrimination, injustice, hate and hostility, is that of, at worst, anger, and at best, righteous indignation. Perhaps the thing that makes the Chicano the most angry is the subtle actions on the part of

²¹James Baldwin, as quoted in James H. Cone, *Black Theology and Black Power* (New York: Seabury Press, 1969), p. 13.

the Anglo which continue to try to convince the suppressed Chicano that he is an inferior being. These are fighting words, or rather, fighting actions. Hence, open rebellion, as seen in many of the more militant, sometimes even violent actions of some Chicano groups. It is not my intention or my desire to condone acts of violence under any circumstances other than in self-defense. But I do justify many acts of the Chicanos, not *per se*, but as acts provoked by the violence of the Anglo. The violence of the Chicano has been merely responsive; a re-action, so to say, and not an intrinsic Chicano response to life as many would have us believe.

But anger is a legitimate response to oppression, and the Chicano is the oppressed. It is unfortunate, that the recorder of the Moses incident, in Exodus 2:11-12 did not use the word anger (or perhaps it was an oversight or mistake of subsequent translators), for that was the only human emotion that could have prompted Moses to act at such a great risk. This writer, at least, has always concluded that Moses became angry at the injustice he was seeing done to his brother, and thus acted, or re-acted, in anger.

To be conscious Chicano is to be angry most of the time, just as it is to be Black, and James H. Cone expresses the feelings of the Chicano when he says:

This work, then, is written with a definite attitude, the attitude of an angry black man, disgusted with the oppression of black people in America and with the scholarly demand to be 'objective' about it. Too many people have died, and too many are on the edge of death. In fairness to my understanding of

the truth, I cannot allow myself to engage in a dispassionate, non-committed debate on the status of the black-white relations in America by assessing the pro and con of Black Power.²²

SUMMARY

This chapter has been an attempt at defining the Chicano and his situation. It has also been a description of the circumstances in which the Chicano has lived. We conclude, then, by asking again the question, who is the Chicano? The Chicano is neither a Mexican, who can pack up and go "back" to Mexico, nor is he solely an "American" a la Anglo. The Chicano is a U.S. resident (usually citizen). He is a minority who has been oppressed and continues to be oppressed to a certain degree, by the Anglo majority. The name "Chicano" is his own self-designation. The characteristics commonly attributed to him by myth, ignorance and prejudice, such as laziness, passiveness, machismo, inferiority, etc., are untrue and must be refuted. The characteristics that distinguish the Chicano from other Americans are not accidents of birth or heritage, or inherent human qualities. What sets the Chicano apart from the rest of the Americans, is mostly the marks that certain experiences in living as an oppressed minority have left in him.

The Chicano has been the underdog in the enforcement of the law, in politics, in government, in employment, in education and even in the church itself. Chicanos have been a "colonized" people. They bear in their body ("soma," not "sarquis") the marks of the conquerer and are the "conquered." Chicanos have experienced the profound and

²²*Ibid.*, p. 2.

devastating feeling of, not only oppression, but rejection, by their own country. They know the very rare experience of countrylessness.

Finally we conclude this chapter, leaving the Chicano at his boiling point; as an angry American.

Chapter 3

THE CHICANO SITUATION

Traditionally the Chicano situation has been approached on a subject-object relationship; the subject being the predominant Anglo society and the object being the Chicano minority. Today the subject-object relationship remains but has become mutual. This is to say that today, not only is the Chicano the object for the Anglo subject, but the Anglo is also the object for the Chicano subject. Thus the subject-object relationship continues with either group viewing the other as an object. The Chicano traditionally has been an object of study and analysis at worst; a problem to be solved at best. Now, though the latter situation continues, the Anglo has more and more become an object of analysis and study for the Chicano or the pro-Chicano Anglo. The Anglo situation in relation to the Chicano has become a problem to be solved.

This dissertation, and more particularly this chapter, contends that the "Chicano situation" transcends the subject-object relationship from either side (Anglo or Chicano) and must be considered as a whole of which Anglo, Chicano, and the relationship between the two are a part.

THE MEANING OF SITUATION

Tillich says that "situation" does not refer to the psychological or sociological state in which individuals or groups live, but

rather to the scientific and artistic, the economic, political, and ethical forms in which they express their interpretation of existence.¹ To him, the "situation" that theology must consider is the creative interpretation of existence. Although conditioning factors must never be ignored these do not make up the situation itself. "The 'situation' to which theology must respond is the totality of man's creative self-interpretation in a special period."² In a limited sense, perhaps even somewhat provincial, the Chicano situation is a special period here in the United States. Although it is not seen here as the only relevant situation as Black theology sees the Black situation, it is still of great relevance, and one that must be dealt with.

The term "creative" in Tillich's statement above may be misleading without qualification. It is not used here in a creative-destructive polarity, or as opposed to "non-creative." As I understand it, in this context it is used as process. In other words, it is the process within the situation. This self-interpretation within the Chicano situation in particular, at this point may have been, although creative, demonic, to say the least. The Chicano situation today has been destructive to a great extent to both Chicano and Anglo. But there are also creative elements within the situation which are very positive and must be explored.

Our task, then, is to view the situation as it is presented in Chicano-Anglo relations and interaction, for therein lies the real

¹Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), I, 3-4.

²*Ibid.*, p. 4.

Chicano "situation."

Tillich uses the word situation in its common meaning to describe any situation in itself. When he speaks of the situation as he describes it above, he encloses it in quotation marks. Thus when we are discussing here either the Chicano, Anglo or any other situation *per se*, the term will be used as always, but when the Chicano situation as the one described above is referred to it will be the "Chicano situation."

THE CHICANO SITUATION *PER SE*

In order to have a better grasp of the "Chicano situation" wholistically, we must first understand the Chicano "situation" in itself. We need not dwell on the existing sociological situation, for it has been dealt with adequately by the sociologists, and we have described it somewhat implicitly in the previous chapter. The question here should be: what does the Chicano, as he has been described in the previous chapter, think of himself? How does he interpret his sociological and political circumstances? How does he view the Anglo-American who at best has been patronizing to him, at worst, of course, oppressive?

Chicano Feelings

Inferiority. There is no doubt that, given the situation of oppression within which he has lived for so many years, the Chicano does tend to feel a profound sense of inferiority. Those who do not

feel this inferiority, do feel that they must do twice as well as the Anglo to be accepted. A graphic example of the latter feeling is in the heroism demonstrated by the Chicanos in battle during the last three wars the United States has experienced. This is mentioned again, merely because it is such a well-known and well-documented fact, but the case is the same in the field of education or any other area. In the area of education it has always taken little to label a Chicano "incapable of learning," "retarded," "not material for college," etc., but much to consider him excellent when competing with a majority of Anglo students.

Thus the Chicano suffers this feeling of inferiority, not because he is in fact inferior (as with all people, some of us may be), but because the line he is given to toe is superior to his strength and resources. Rodolfo Gonzales tells us about feeling the burden. He says,

I stand here looking back,
and now I see
 the present,
and still
 I am the campesino
 I am the political coyote--
of the same name,
 Joaquin,
in a country that has wiped out
all my history,
 stifled all my pride,
in a country that has placed a
different weight of indignity upon
 my
 age
 old
 burdened back.
 Inferiority
is the new load. . . .³

³Rodolfo Gonzales, *I am Joaquín* (New York: Bantam, 1972), p. 51.

Frustration. To the Chicano who will not accept the verdict of "inferior," life can be very frustrating, because the alternative to not being considered inferior is: "prove it." As in our legal system one is presumed innocent until proven guilty, the Anglo is considered intelligent until proven otherwise, and even then, we still have our doubts or our reluctance to pronounce someone as "incapable of learning," "retarded," or whatever the label may be. With the Chicano it is the opposite. He is inferior until proven otherwise, and the burden of proof is entirely on him and against a society, with the zealousness of a prosecutor seeking to convict a criminal, trying to prove him inferior. The "Chicanito" stands before the Anglo court with nothing but his bare native intelligence against a battery of tests of all kinds, all foreign to his tongue, his culture, his religion--all shouting, indeed as that same prosecutor, "You're inferior! You're inferior! Admit it." Many have "proven it" even against such odds, but many more have fallen by the wayside in sheer frustration. Again Rodolfo Gonzales gives us an insight into the experience of Chicano frustration against such odds. He says,

Here I stand
 before the court of justice,
 guilty
for all the glory of my raza
 to be sentenced to despair.⁴

Anger and violence. In all peoples anger at its culminating point is expressed in violence more often than not. Many times some

⁴*Ibid.*, p. 64.

Chicanos have come to the point of resisting violence or at least oppression with violence--a violence that is usually provoked by the oppressors. But for the most part the Chicano has subdued his anger and used it in a non-violent way to fight the injustices caused upon his people. The United Farm Workers Union, under Caesar Chavez, is a deliberately non-violent movement, but the anger at injustices from farm growers has been so great that Caesar has found it necessary to suffer two record-breaking periods of fasting, to guide his people in non-violent ways and restrain their raw anger which at times if unchecked will erupt in violent acts, abhorrent to Chavez.

Although the acts of violence which have taken place from time to time have been objects of much hostile comment and criticism, the most appealing movements among the Chicano "causa" have been those which are non-violent. Witness to this the fact that the single most well-known, well-respected and followed leader the Chicano has had in his entire history is a discipline of non-violence--Caesar Chavez. Chavez's movement has more adherents and sympathizers than any other movement identified with the Chicano in his entire history.

In recent years, as the Chicano and his cause have become more sophisticated, the pen has been a tremendous channel for expression of this anger welled up for generations within him. So you can feel it in most poetic form in Rodolfo Gonzales' work.

These then
are the rewards
 this society has
for sons of chiefs
 and kings
 and bloody revolutionists,

barrio. I knew a barrio (Chicano, of course) with such a name in Marfa, Texas. In all probability the barrio is still there today, though hopefully in much better condition. But the fact that makes this name "sal si puedes" even more symbolic of the Chicano situation is that it is not one barrio in a small town in Texas, but that throughout the country, where you find a concentration of Mexican-Americans (Chicanos), you will find not only many "colonias Mejicanas" (Mexican colonies) but you will find many who bear that name ("Sal si puedes").

The reason for the name is that in these "sal si puedes" barrios on rainy or snowy days it used to be near impossible to get out of them. The streets were bad, there were no drainage systems to amount to anything, no sewage, no sidewalks, no curbs, no pavement, no anything. But the beauty of this name is that like the name Chicano, it has always been a self-designation. In other words, the Anglo American did not deliberately place the Chicano under these conditions so that he would not get out, although there are those Chicanos who do believe that it was a deliberate well calculated act of the oppressor (the Anglo); but that the Chicano in good humor and defiance of circumstances gave the barrio that name as a constant challenge to himself. It is a true picture of the Chicano situation; a constant challenge to come out of it; to make it, says Rodolfo Gonzales:

I have endured in the rugged mountains
 of our country
I have survived the toils and slavery
 of the fields.
 I have existed
in the barrios of the city
in the suburbs of bigotry
in the mines of social snobbery

in the prisons of dejection
 in the muck of exploitation
 and
 in the fierce heat of racial hatred.

And now the trumpet sounds,
 the music of the people stirs the
 revolution.

Like a sleeping giant it slowly
 rears its head
 to the sound of

 tramping feet
 clamoring voices
 mariachi strains
 fiery tequila explosions
 the smell of chile verde and
 soft brown eyes of expectation for a
 better life.

.

The odds are great

but my spirit is strong,

 my faith unbreakable,

 my blood is pure.

I am Aztec prince and Christian Christ.

 I SHALL ENDURE!

 I WILL ENDURE!⁸

THE ANGLO SITUATION IN RELATION TO THE CHICANOS

As it is necessary to look at the Chicano situation in itself,
 so is it necessary to look at its counterpart which is the Anglo situa-
 tion in relation to the Chicanos.

The Conquerer

The Anglo's awareness of the Chicano begins with the taste of
 victory; the feeling of having conquered the Mexicans. The attitude
 of the Anglo was not in any way unique. It was the simple well known

⁸Gonzales, pp. 86-93.

statement: "to the victor belong the spoils." At the beginning these were the lands and their richness out of which Mexican-Americans were gradually swindled at best, simply driven off at worst. Because the Chicano knew the land and how to make it produce, he was kept. Chicanos were the farm keepers and ranch hands. They taught the Anglo much. They became his servant, and very loyal servants they are to this day. The Anglo was the master, the "patron." Since the Chicano uses the diminutive to show affection, the master (the Anglo) became the "patroncito." "Patroncito" means "little boss."

As frontiers were pushed and more richness was derived from the soil, the Anglo found needed cheap labor. The Chicano began to plow his fields, irrigate his lands, tend his cattle, pick his crops. When Mexico suffered some bad times, particularly bad for the poor and the dispossessed, the influx of Chicanos into the United States became greater and life, as difficult as it was here for the peon or the ranch hand or the grape picker, was better than what he had to endure in Mexico. Because of this, many Mexicans came to the United States as a temporary measure to alleviate their situation, but always planning to return to their native land when things changed there. The Anglo, in the meantime, saw the Chicano as God-sent, since he demanded little, contributed much and through his labors could enrich his master.

One thing that is not pointed out too often, is that throughout the history of Anglo-Chicano relations, although this was one of master and servant, there was a mutual loyalty between master and servant.

It was the Chicano, of course, who inspired this loyalty in the relationship. It has always been a mystery to this Chicano writer that the Chicano should be portrayed as lazy when, ever since he can remember, he and all those around him worked seven days a week from sunrise to sunset. Indeed, if the Chicano had been lazy, he would have been exterminated, for in that early period of his history few would have cared. The Chicano survived because of his industriousness and his loyalty to his patron. He was profitable to the Anglo, and his loyalty to his "patroncito," gave the Anglo a sense of security and well-being. He made him feel his superiority by his own lowliness and humility.

Anglo Superiority

There were other reasons besides the loyalty of the Chicano which made it easy for the Anglo to feel superior to the Chicano. The Anglo was "white," which meant to him that his blood was pure, while the Chicano had in him the blood of the "savages," the Indians. The religion of the Anglo was also, according to them, superior to that of the Mexicans. The religion of the Chicanos, although it was Roman Catholic, seemed more pagan than Christian, to the Anglo Protestant. The Spanish, whose greater interest was other than converting the Indians, merely substituted Christian saints for the old Indian gods.

Effect of Chicano Awareness on the Anglo

The Anglo has not been the same since the Chicano became

aware of his potential freedom, his rights as citizen and his right to his part of all that this country has to offer. Now he is confronted by employees, students and tenants, and is prosecuted by his government on behalf of these Chicanos. He is bugged by his church and bothered at times by his own conscience, for it is not easy to see the injustices that he has been party to for so many years, and not experience guilt.

Before the Chicano awareness and reaction the Anglo could feel very much a Christian, for he had the luxury of being benevolent to the Chicano. As long as the Chicano was "in his place," he was no threat to him. The Chicano even served as a recipient of the Anglo's benevolence.

The Chicano himself helped the Anglo come to this feeling of superiority and mastery, not so much because he did not have the courage to rebel, but because his plans were not to stay as a part of the United States. The greater part of Chicanos who came from Mexico in 1910 intended to return to Mexico. My own parents did not even record our births here, that we may be recorded in Mexico upon our return. Consequently, my birth certificate is a special document which became a vital statistic fourteen years after my birth. The Chicano saw his stay in Mexico as temporary and did not consider himself a citizen, even when he was one. This can be said of even a generation ago. Witness to this the fact that to this day many older Chicanos call Anglos "los Americanos" (the Americans). This is virtually saying, "They are the Americans." We are guests, at best.

But the Chicano is aware now of his right to this country and in becoming aware, he has made the Anglo aware of the part he has played in the Chicano situation, and the need for change. The Anglo in his present awareness realizes that he cannot be the same again. The Anglo-Chicano relationship must be healed; it must be worked out. He must do something, no longer for this Chicano, but about this Chicano. The Anglo feels a need for liberation but not from the Chicano, but from himself and his wrong relationship with that Chicano who is another human being seeking fulfillment as he is. To this situation our theology must speak.

THE SITUATION AS A WHOLE

Both the Chicano and the Anglo situation as such have been presented above. Now the situation as a whole must be examined, and its effect on the human situation of Americans, both Anglo and Chicano, determined. The questions from the situation must be formulated, that they may later be correlated with theological answers.

Destructive Elements in the Situation

It is my contention that certain destructive elements attendant in this situation, which are not unique to Chicanos or any group, ethnic or otherwise, are oppressive to our humanity, transcend the Anglo-Chicano relationship and are a threat to the salvation of both Anglo and Chicano.

Racism. The term racism has been overworked particularly by

minorities in accusation of the White majority. In regards to the Chicano, it is the Chicano who accuses the Anglo, with good reason, of being a racist. The contention of both Black and Chicano is that all Whites are racists and that the Black and the Chicano cannot be racist. Their anti-White attitude is only "counter-racism." In other words, White racism is the action; Chicano or Black racism is the re-action. James H. Cone says: "While it is true that blacks do hate whites, black hatred is not racism." Then he goes on to define racism according to Webster and to argue for the non-racism of the Blacks' hatred of Whites.⁹

It is not my intention to get into any polemic over something which I consider, at least for our purpose, a matter of semantics. I believe Cone's argument is quite correct as to the Black's justifiable hatred of the White man. He is also correct in arguing that the source of the anger, hostility, and hatred of the Black toward the White is different than that of the White toward the Black. The same arguments presented for the Blacks can be made for the Chicanos. But I contend that regardless of the source of or reason for anger toward, hostility to, or hatred for a fellow human being, is wrong. It makes for estrangement, and to be estranged from your fellowman is to be estranged from yourself and consequently from God. Speaking only from the Chicano situation and to the Chicano situation, regardless of whether your anger, hostility and hatred is downright aggressive

⁹James H. Cone, *Black Theology and Black Power* (New York: Seabury Press, 1969), pp. 14-15.

behavior, or whether it is a re-action to that behavior, it is still wrong. The person who finds himself within this human condition stands in need of liberation from it. Simply said, there should be no racism, regardless of its attendant causes.

Guilt. Another destructive element in the Chicano situation is guilt. The Anglo feels guilty because of his aggression--the part he has played in the dehumanizing of Chicanos. The Chicano feels guilty for allowing this to happen and for his inadequacy in providing a better situation for his children and his children's children, and for the hatred he feels for the Anglo regardless of its justifiableness. The point is that both Anglo and Chicano suffer the same human emotion: guilt. The problem arises when either seeks to rid himself of this guilt in superficial ways which merely alleviate the situation without confronting the problem which is the source of that guilt.

The Anglo begins to look around for objects for his goodness and benevolence. A very good example of this is the fact that while our Chicano barrios are crying for help, Anglo churches, groups, and individuals are going across to all parts of Mexico to take food, clothing, shelter, medicine, education, the Gospel, etc. This brings the feeling of loving the Chicano, but it saves us the agony of knowing him, or better yet, encountering him in all his anger and hate and hostility, which to begin with, the Anglo himself has provoked.

The Chicano too has his superficial dealings with his guilt. He too seeks to alleviate it by means less costly than life itself, which is the only proper payment on liberation. The Chicano seeking

this type of alleviation, works harder, studies harder, shows the Anglo that he can take it; he shows endurance. He says to himself: "I am being Christian, for I am enduring suffering from my enemy," or "two wrongs don't make a right." The Chicano becomes the suffering servant, and in doing that evades the issue of his oppression and his deep human need to "go to Pharaoh and say, 'let my people go.'"

Injustice. The injustice in the Chicano situation is destructive to both the person committing the injustice and the person against whom the injustice is committed, for according to Tillich, in interpersonal relations, there is a demand for each person in the relationship to be acknowledged as an 'ego.' In Tillich's own words:

Injustice against the other one is always injustice against oneself. The master who treats the slave not as an ego but as a thing endangers his quality as an ego. The slave by his very existence hurts the master as much as he is hurt by him. The external inequality is balanced by the destruction of the ego-quality of the master.¹⁰

The master and slave relationship above, it must be noted, is merely used as an example. In the Chicano situation, the relationship we are referring to is that of Anglo-Chicano or Oppressor and Oppressed. The injustice in the Chicano situation destroys our humanness for the "I-Thou" relationship is absent at the point of encounter between Anglo and Chicano. Injustice, just as racism and guilt, produces a condition in man which leaves him unfulfilled, for man was made for humanness and humanness precludes the acknowledgment of other human beings as

¹⁰Paul Tillich, *Love, Power and Justice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1960), pp. 78-79.

human beings and not objects to be used and exploited.

We have said that injustice destroys, or at best distorts the humanity of both the unjust one and the one who is the object of the injustice. To be more specific, we have simply said that the unjust Anglo's humanity is distorted as much as is the humanity of the Chicano whom he has unconsciously or consciously tried to dehumanize. But we must go a step further. The re-action or response elicited by the injustice of the Anglo becomes in turn unjust though justifiable.

Let it be said then at this point, that an unjust action is wrong. It is wrong for both the doer of the action and the one it is done to. But more important, let it be said that whether the injustice is done out of profit, greed, ignorance or as a defense against an initial injustice, at the moment that it becomes an injustice, it is a part of the one committing it and against his humanity. In other words, as we said concerning racism; whatever the reason for acting unjustly, it is against one's humanity.

A Need for Liberation

The ultimate question that emerges from the "Chicano situation" is one of humanity. As has been concluded very explicitly, our present situation has tended toward dehumanization for both Anglo and Chicano. Consequently, there is a very real need for liberation not merely for the Chicano, or the oppressed, but also for the Anglo, or the oppressor. For, says Paulo Freire,

Dehumanization, which makes not only those whose humanity has been stolen, but also (though in a different way) those who have stolen it, is a distortion of the vocation of becoming more fully human.¹¹

But the question that can be raised at this point, is, who, or what can save us or liberate us from this situation?

The Oppressed. There is a very strong feeling among Chicanos, that ultimately it will have to be the Chicano who liberates or, in more religious terms, save the whole situation. Perhaps it is because the Anglo has played Messiah with the Chicano for so long, that now the Chicano wants to imitate him, or outdo him. Paulo Freire says that "In their alienation, the oppressed want at any cost to resemble the oppressor, to imitate him, to follow him."¹² But it is Freire who also claims that liberation can only come by the oppressed. He says,

This, then, is the great humanistic and historical task of the oppressed: to liberate themselves and their oppressors as well. The oppressors, who oppress, exploit, and rape by virtue of their power, cannot find in this power the strength to liberate either the oppressed or themselves. Only power that springs from the weakness of the oppressed will be sufficiently strong to free both.¹³

The Oppressor. It is so much easier to believe that the oppressor is the one who can bring about liberation, since he is the one who determines the relationship of oppressor against oppressed. All efforts at dealing with the Chicano situation have been geared

¹¹ Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972), p. 28.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 49.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

toward convincing the Anglo that he is wrong and consequently making him relinquish his power. It is amusing to see how long we have been using the term "self-determination" for Chicanos, and it is the Chicanos themselves who confront the Anglo and ask him for self-determination, when all the time they are asking *him* to determine *their* "self-determination." I agree totally with Freire when he says that "Any attempt to 'soften' the power of the oppressor in deference to the weakness of the oppressed almost always manifests itself in the form of false generosity."¹⁴

No, any relinquishment of the powerful leaves the oppressed at a point where he can be returned to his state, if not of oppressed, at least as one under the control of *him* who would be his oppressor. No, the Chicano cannot look to the Anglo for his liberation, nor can the Anglo look to the Chicano. The Chicano cannot simply say set me free, and the Anglo cannot say, "forgive me," or "let me make it up" or simply subject himself to suffer the anger and retaliation due him from the Chicano.

From Whence comes Liberation?

Both above-mentioned actions, that of the Chicano and that of the Anglo are necessary to our liberation. The Chicano must muster out all the courage he is capable of and say I will no longer be oppressed. This must be said to his oppressor, the Anglo, but the price of that statement must be considered. The Anglo, in turn must ask forgiveness

¹⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 28-29.

for his role as oppressor. Perhaps the suffering of the anger and abuse from the Chicano is the price that must be paid. But these are merely first steps in the way to a true liberation.

I contend that as healthy as the confrontation of the Anglo with the claims of the Chicanos may be, or as much as the Anglo can concede to the Chicano; this will not bring about a true humanization of either one. A true liberation for both Anglo (oppressor) and Chicano (oppressed) has its answer in theology.

It was said at the beginning of this dissertation that this had to be a theology of liberation simply by the nature of the "situation" addressed. Thus the question which is raised is one of liberation, and that is the answer we must seek from theology. The rest of our dissertation will be concerned with the answers.

SUMMARY

This chapter has presented a deviation from the usual approach to the Chicano situation and given us a new approach which encompasses, in the Chicano situation, not only the Chicanos themselves but all of society. It proposes Tillich's definition and differentiation between situation and "situation" in quotation marks. The Chicano situation and the Anglo situation in themselves have been analyzed.

The whole "Chicano situation" has been analyzed in the light of the Chicano and the Anglo situation. The effect of the situation on both Anglo and Chicano has been brought forth.

Most of all, in this chapter the inadequacy of a liberation

coming either from the Chicano or the Anglo has been shown. This dissertation looks for an answer, or answers, beyond ourselves. It seeks for an answer in theology.

PART II

THE ANSWERS

Chapter 4

INTRODUCTION

In the introduction to this dissertation, Tillich's theory of correlation was claimed as the method to be used in this theology. The first part was concerned with an analysis of the Chicano situation and a formulation of the questions implied in that situation. As we go into Part Two, which is the answers to those questions, it becomes necessary to be more explicit concerning the method of correlation as it is used in this dissertation. It is also necessary to show how the general question implied in the Chicano situation is one of *liberation*. The writer also finds it necessary to further explain his own faith, since it will undoubtedly show in this part of the dissertation, as his own involvement in the situation showed in Part One.

THE METHOD OF CORRELATION

In using the method of correlation for his systematic theology, Tillich addresses the questions implied in man's total existence. Chicano theology is limited in scope. It merely addresses the questions implied in man's existence as it relates to this specific time and space in history: the Chicano situation.

As Tillich speaks about man's estrangement, we consider its specific expression in the Anglo-Chicano relationship. We do the same thing as we discuss God, Man, Christ. We deal with these within the Chicano situation and therefore as they relate specifically to that

situation. The answers that will be given in the next two chapters answer in particularity, from the Christian message, the questions implied or raised within the Chicano situation.

The use of this method here can best be expressed in the question, "What is human existence in the light of the 'Chicano situation?'" or, "What are the questions of human existence within the 'Chicano situation?'" and then seeking answers from the Christian message, which is the task of this second part in our dissertation.

As the correlation of answers to questions in the Chicano situation is made in this second part, let it be understood that the use of Tillich's method neither implies nor precludes the use of his theology exclusively. There will be extensive use made of Tillich's theology, but not to the exclusion of any other works.

The answers, or attempts at answers, that will follow in the succeeding chapters are from the Christian message primarily. The fact that they will be Chicano is merely by nature of the particularity of this theology.

THE QUESTION OF LIBERATION

The general question implied in the Chicano situation is one of liberation. At the outset of this dissertation it was believed that this would not be a theology of liberation, since it was neither an appeal to the oppressed that they may seek their liberation, nor to the oppressor that he may free the oppressed. As the situation unfolded, however, it became apparent that although in a sense other than simple

political liberation, the question that is raised in the Chicano situation is still very definitely one of liberation. It is raised as a question of liberation for both Anglo and Chicano. The reason for this is that the Chicano situation, as analyzed in the previous chapters is predicated on the suffering of the oppressed. The reader has seen this throughout the previous chapters and will see the answers as applying to the question of liberation.

The term salvation could have been used as well as liberation, since that is the ultimate we seek for both Anglo and Chicano, and for their relationship. But since the issue was basically the relationship of oppressor and oppressed, we speak of the need for liberation. In other words, the crux of the matter lies in the liberation of the Chicano, which would be the salvation of both Chicano and Anglo. This being the case, the word "salvation" may be used for "liberation" at times, though the two are not always synonymous.

THIS POINT OF VIEW

As was stated at the outset of the dissertation, this statement is confessional. Therefore the answers given are those of the writer's faith and hope. These are the conclusions of many years of work, study and experience within the Christian Church. It has already been mentioned that the majority of Chicanos are Roman Catholic, but this Chicano writing is Protestant and has been such since infancy. Those of us who were raised as Chicano Protestants have received most of our instruction from the Anglo Protestants. In all denominations we are a

product of the Anglo Protestant church. Our liturgy, our literature and church polity are that of the Anglo Protestant church simply translated. At this particular point this will be an advantage to the one writing, because he speaks to the Anglo within his own setting, and to a large extent as one with him. He can be considered as one with the Anglo because he was nurtured in the same understanding of the Christian faith. It is from within this Anglo Protestant understanding of the Christian faith that the following answers will be formulated and correlated to the questions implied in the earlier part of this dissertation. It is with this understanding that the reader should receive this theology.

In faith we proceed to the answers in the following chapters.

Chapter 5

ANSWERS FROM CHICANISMO

As this quest for answers begins, the fact must be borne in mind that the Chicano himself is in quest for answers to his situation. In the last ten years he has more and more been attempting to solve his problems, not only politically, economically and socially, but spiritually also.

There are in the Chicano attempts to answer, some quasi-theological approaches which must be considered. There are those explicit theological answers to the whole "Chicano situation" from Chicanismo, and there are those answers which are not consciously theological on the part of Chicanismo, but are very definitely sound theologically and offered as such here.

QUASI-THEOLOGICAL ANSWERS

The pen is a powerful force, and it has been that for the Chicano. In the last ten years, more newspapers, periodicals, books and other literary works have appeared than a Chicano seeking to be informed can keep up with. Though most of the material found in said literature is simply descriptive of the problem, much is also viable alternatives to the existing situation.

La Raza

La Raza Unida party is a strictly political answer to our

political situation which will not be discussed here at any length, but mentioned nonetheless, because it shows the seriousness of the Chicano plight.

La Raza Unida party started in Crystal City, Texas, home town of the one who writes here. It started because the Democratic party, to which Chicanos have traditionally belonged, had given them at best tokenism, at worst had neglected them completely. Chicanos said, "We must form our own party." So now we have a third party.

La Raza concept is one which has elements of religious or cosmic significance. Though La Raza includes all people ideally, practically it is a Chicano concept, and it is a very real part of Chicanismo. It is called "La Raza," "La Raza de Bronce" "La Raza Cosmica" and "La Raza Nueva."

To give you an idea of the quasi-theological nature of the concept, consider an article entitled "LA RAZA NUEVA: The Fire that Does not Consume Itself." According to this article,

La Raza Nueva is not afraid of the word *love* or *humanity* or *one world* or *self-determination* or *non-intervention*.

It abhors *arrogance*, *vanity*, *materialism*, and yet it strives for the material betterment of man. It's the new Humanism which says that all material progress must be for the social betterment of all and not just a select few.

La Raza Nueva is the great bulwark against racism because its very nature negates racism. It is the fusion of many races and not just a 'melting pot' of European nationalities.¹

As can be seen at the very outset of the article, in its title, this is

¹Jose Castorena, "LA RAZA NUEVA: The Fire that Does not Consume Itself," *Regeneracion* (1970), 1:3, p. 1.

no mere political appeal, but rather a call to discipleship. At least it has that effect on this particular Chicano.

Aztlan

Anyone familiar with the Chicano movement today has heard about Aztlan. This is a concept similar to "La Raza Nueva" except for the fact that this one is predicated on space. By this is meant that those who believe in "las tierras de Aztlan," believe that certain territory which covers part of the United States and part of which is New Mexico, belong to the people of Aztlan. This means that those people and that land belong together.

The people of Aztlan call themselves "el pueblo del quinto sol" (the people of the fifth sun), descendants of the Aztecs and more ancient tribes who were in turn the ancestors of the Aztecs. Armando B. Rendon dates the origins of the people of Aztlan to "the time that the Christ Passion was unfolding on the other side of the world and for perhaps a thousand years afterward." He says that at that time "a way of life and thought was evolving which the man-god Quetzalcoatl had forged and which the Nahuas, the Toltecs, the Chichimecas, and then the Aztecs nurtured through the centuries."² It seems that these people migrated from the North toward what is now Mexico. The survivors of the Exodus were the Aztecs whose name is derived from Aztlan. The general idea among those who subscribe to the concept of Aztlan is that

²Armando B. Rendon, "The People of Aztlan," in Livie Isauro Duran and H. Russell Bernard, *Introduction to Chicano Studies* (New York: Macmillan, 1973), pp. 28-29.

the people of the fifth sun are now ready to return to their land of Aztlan.

The history is long and interesting, to say the least, but at this point I simply give you the concept as it was formulated in March, 1969 in Denver, Colorado, during a Chicano youth conference sponsored by the Crusade for Justice. "In brief," says Rendon, "the Spiritual Plan of Aztlan asserts:

In the spirit of a new people . . . we, the Chicano, inhabitants and civilizers of the northern land of Aztlan, from whence came our forefathers, reclaiming the land of their birth and consecrating the determination of our people of the sun, declare that the call of our blood is our power, our responsibility, and our inevitable destiny. . . .

With our heart in our hand and our hands in the soil, we declare the independence of our mestizo Nation. We are a bronze people with a bronze culture. Before the world, before all of North America, before all our brothers in the Bronze Continent, we are a Nation. We are a union of free pueblos. We are Aztlan.³

This is one of the alternatives to the "Chicano situation" before the Chicano today. Consider Rendon's appeal to Chicanos to accept the concept of Aztlan:

We Chicanos, the people of el Quinto Sol, must realize Aztlan in ourselves, individually and as a group. We are part of the land but we need not seek a geographic center for our Aztlan; it lies within ourselves and it is boundless, immeasurable, and limited only by our lack of vision, by our lack of courage by our hesitancy to grasp the truth of our being. We are Aztlan and Aztlan is us.⁴

We need not go into the many facets of Aztlan or the implications for the whole "Chicano situation." Here it is merely presented as a concept found now quite abundantly in the literature and art of Chicanos.

³*Ibid.*, pp. 30-31.

⁴*Ibid.*, p. 34.

Chicanismo

Chicanismo itself is considered by many a profound religious concept, or at least a way of thinking necessary for survival as a Chicano. It has in it elements of La Raza, Aztlan, Christianity and sometimes, it is my belief, some very strong strands of Chicano racism.

It appears under many names and within different groups and movements. In the Presbyterian Church, for example, there is an organization of Chicanos which calls itself "La Raza Churchmen." It is interesting to note here, that in the United Methodist Church, the Chicano movement, which calls itself "Latin American Methodist Action Group," is strictly a political movement. I know little of "La Raza Churchmen" but it seems to be also more political than religious. This is a sad commentary on the church among the Chicanos. This is one reason why this writer opted for seeking some answers from the realm of theology.

Consider Chicanismo as Rendon sees it and as he calls Chicanos to accept it as a way of life,

Chicanismo offers a new or renewed adaptation to a reality of life for the Mexican American. Segregated, maligned, despised, subjugated, destroyed for what he is, and barred from becoming what he would be, the Mexican American turns toward a new path. Unleashing the frustrations and emotions of many generations of lifetimes, reviving suppressed memories, and casting off the weighing terrors, he resurrects himself as a Chicano. He can face the onslaught of cultural racism perpetrated by the Anglo, which he has only endured up to now, with new power, new insight, new optimism--if not for himself, at

least for his family and the Chicanos that are to come.

By admitting to being Chicano, to being this new person, we lose nothing, we gain a great deal.⁵

Or consider it as it appears in the following excerpt from a news item on the restoration of Sal Castro to his teaching position which he had lost for taking a stand for his Chicano students. It reads:

Everyone present that night at the school board meeting could see that the vehicle of *La Causa* [The Cause] is love, that the power is faith and that the tactic is direct non-violent action. One could certainly sense the historical significance of this action and that the joy and gaiety expressed in the room was that of *La Raza* fulfilling its God-given destiny.

.....⁶ . . .
La Raza, then, has truly become a new hope for the future.⁶

The above are the explicit theological or quasi-theological alternatives from within Chicanismo to Chicanos for the most part, but in some instances considered as viable for all people. The general way of thinking above has more adherents than people think it has.

As for this Chicano writer, he accepts the analysis the Chicano has made of the situation and most of, or at least the substance of, what is proposed as a viable Chicano response, or viable Chicano responses. But these are accepted not as answers but rather as questions needing the ultimate answer which is in theology, and more specifically in the Christian message. As Tillich considers the arguments for the existence of God as the question rather than the answer, so are the Chicano alternatives considered as questions rather

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 33.

⁶ "La Causa de La Raza, A New Hope for the Future," *La Raza* (October 15, 1968).

than answers, for they proclaim the deep longings of the Chicano, as well as the injustice of the Anglo, both of whom are seeking their true humanity.

The "La Raza" concept can be seen as a profound desire for the "new creation" which can be considered a universal longing of all mankind. The Aztlan alternative is again the expression of that profound feeling of countrylessness which was discussed in Chapter Two, and the exposure of the injustice of those who are at fault for this Chicano feeling. Tillich tells us that the desire for space is a very real human desire. He says,

The power of space is great, and it is always active both for creation and destruction. It is the basis of the desire of any group of human beings to have a place of their own, a place which gives them reality, presence, power of living, which feeds them, body and soul.⁷

Thus the Chicano cries for Aztlan. As to Chicanismo as a concept in itself, it simply exposes the injustice again of the oppressor and the profound desire of the Chicano to find the way.

CHICANO LEADERS

There are those persons and movements which have made and are making a tremendous impact on both our Chicano community and society in general. These have been, for the most part a positive force in the Chicano community. In the Anglo or Chicano-Anglo community they have had at times a negative effect, at times a positive one. Three

⁷Paul Tillich, *Theology of Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1959), p. 32.

persons are considered, each of whom has what can be considered a movement. These three are real Chicanos, born and raised in the United States as migrant workers. They can be set against the Chicano experience as set before us in the first chapter and found to be truly a part of that experience. These leaders are, Reies Tijerina, Rodolfo Gonzales and Caesar Chavez. It is interesting to note that each one is a leader and has a movement in a different area of the Southwest. Reies Tijerina in New Mexico, Rodolfo Gonzales in Colorado, and Caesar Chavez in California. Texas also has its leader. There is Angel Gutierrez, whose movement is the third party of "La Raza Unida," already mentioned above. The reason he is not discussed in this dissertation is simply the fact that both he and the movement he is identified with are political in nature and have no grounding or involvement in any religious, theological or church group or organization.

Reies Tijerina

Reies Tijerina was born in 1927 somewhere in the route traveled by migrant farm workers, for he was born in a farm worker's shack. In his youth he became an evangelical preacher, but after observing the injustices done to Chicanos, he claims, he had a vision in which he was reborn as "a prophet of the mountain villages of New Mexico" by an act of divine revelation. At the moment of his vision he was a fugitive from the jail in a small town in the Arizona desert and was hiding amid the cacti on the scorched slopes of the barren Tortilla

Mountains. Steiner quotes Tijerina directly on his vision:

'I went to sleep, and in the morning the sun woke me and that white, how do you say, dew, had covered me, had covered me all over. That night I asked God to show me the future of my life. It shook me, shook me like this, it shook all my life. From there I turned to New Mexico. I saw frozen horses, they started melting and coming to life in a very old kingdom, old walls. Then I saw three Angels of law, and they asked me to help them. They said they had come from a long ways, had traveled the earth and come for me. Those tall pines I saw meant New Mexico . . .'⁸

Perhaps by now people see this man and his vision as insignificant and buried with many other visions and men, although Reies Tijerina is still active and still has a big following. Around the years 1967 or 1968, however, the whole United States was shaken up with what was happening in a courtroom in a small town in New Mexico where Reies with a group of simple peasants had defied the law and was being tried for it. He won his just case only to be jailed later on some other charge. He spent some time in La Tuna, a federal prison near the Texas-New Mexico border. Since his imprisonment his ideology has changed somewhat. He no longer believes in violence, which was one of the disagreements this writer had with his movement. The thrust of his message today, as I have heard, is brotherhood; and a brotherhood that would include all people.

Though Tijerina's visions may be authentic, and I have no reason to believe they are not, and his ideology basically good, I consider it as inadequate for the "Chicano situation" since it has not made any great impact on the Anglo community which is a very real part of

⁸Stan Steiner, *LA RAZA: The Mexican Americans* (New York: Harper & Row, 1970), p. 81.

that "situation."

Rodolfo Gonzales

Rodolfo Gonzales is better known for his great poem, "I am Joaquin," of which I don't know whether it originated in English or Spanish. It is printed in both languages in a Bantam book which reads in the very front cover: "An epic of the Mexican American People. The most famous poem of the Chicano Movement in America." The writer agrees wholeheartedly with that evaluation as can be proven by the many quotations from it throughout this work.

Gonzales was born in Denver, Colorado in 1928. He, as Reyes Tijerina was also born the son of a migrant worker. His involvement has been in great part as director of Crusade for Justice, a Denver-based Chicano civil rights organization with activities throughout the West. Corky, as he is called and better known, is also the founder and president of Escuela Tlatelolco, the first all-Chicano school in America. Escuela Tlatelolco goes from pre-school to college.

Although he is active and has been involved in the Chicano movement throughout the United States, Rodolfo Gonzales' greatest influence on both the Chicano and the Anglo communities has been with his pen. He is the publisher of *El Gallo* newspaper, a playwright ("The Revolutionist," "A Cross for Monclovie") and, of course, a poet, author of another poem entitled "Sol, Lagrimas, Sangre."

Gonzales has influenced the lives not only of Chicanos, but of others also. His poem "I am Joaquin" has been made into a film which

has been shown in countless churches, schools and other organizations. It is truly a moving portrayal of the true Chicano. For the Chicano, such as the one writing, it has a spiritual depth to it because it is like a view in the mirror. For the Anglo, I can only surmise from what I have heard, which is that "it is profoundly moving." It makes the Anglo want to reach out and say "brother," without qualification.

The order in which these three leaders have been presented has a purpose behind it. Reies Tijerina has affected the life of the Chicano in inspiring him with courage to fight for his liberation. Rodolfo Gonzales, in the same way has been an inspiration to the Chicano, but he has gone beyond that. In his poem, "Yo soy Joaquín" he has given the Chicano a hard and sometimes painful look at himself, for the poem is not necessarily a favorable description of the Chicano. It is a true description, and the truth is not always pleasant. Says Rodolfo Gonzales himself, "There is no inspiration without identifiable images, there is no conscience without the sharp knife of truthful exposure, and ultimately, there are no revolutions without poets."⁹ But Rodolfo Gonzales has touched also his Anglo brethren and through his literature has had some influence upon them. He has had a small measure of influence of the type that Caesar Chavez, to whom we now turn, has had in greater measure.

⁹ Rodolfo Gonzales, *I Am Joaquín* (New York: Bantam, 1972), p. 1.

Caesar Chavez

The reason Caesar Chavez has been left for last is that in him, I believe, is a true answer to the questions forged within the "Chicano situation."

Caesar, as is well known, organized and heads what is now the National Farm Workers Union. The "Huelga" or strike started sometime in 1965, but by the time the farm workers started to really organize, Caesar had been going from labor camp to labor camp, or at times just standing by the road looking for persons who were willing to start organizing and began to do some collective bargaining. No one will ever know the number of hours, days, months or even years that this man spent building up interest and finding people who wanted to work for better conditions for the farm workers.

Chavez was, still is, a man grasped by an ultimate concern. His ultimate concern is that farm workers may have a working and living situation that will restore their personhood and dignity. Nothing and no one has been able to sidetrack Chavez or to corrupt him to where he will exploit his situation. He has kept the character, the life style and the working hours of the farm worker. I am sure that by now, millions of dollars have come to his organization from outside sources, but if Caesar has taken any of these funds for personal use he has kept them well hidden, for no one has seen him enjoying a life of luxury. Peter Matthiessen describes Caesar's house:

Caesar Chavez' house--or rather, the house inhabited by Caesar Chavez, whose worldly possessions, scraped together, would scarcely be worth the \$50 that his farm workers union pays for him in monthly rent--has been threatened so often by his enemies that it would be foolish to set down its street number. But on Kensington Street, a quiet stronghold of the American way of life, the house draws attention to itself by its very lack of material aspiration.¹⁰

ANSWERS FROM THE "HUELGA" MOVEMENT

Caesar Chavez and his whole movement's ultimate concern, which is toward finding a true and full humanity, is enough to consider them as an answer to the "Chicano situation." To quote Matthiessen again:

Because he is such an unpublic man, Chavez is one of the few public figures that I would go ten steps out of my way to meet. Besides, I feel that the farm worker's plight is related to all of America's most serious afflictions: racism, poverty, environmental pollution, and urban crowding and decay--all of these compounded by the waste of war.

Before this century is done, there will be an evolution in our values and the values of human society, not because man has become more civilized but because, on a blighted earth, he will have no choice. This evolution--actually a revolution whose violence will depend on the violence with which it is met--must aim at an order of things that treats man and his habitat with respect; the new order, grounded in human ecology, will have humanity as its purpose and the economy as a tool, thus reversing the present order of the system. Such hope as there is of orderly change depends on men like Caesar Chavez, who, of all leaders now in sight, best represents the rising generations. He is an idealist unhampered by ideology, an activist with a near-mystic vision, a militant with a dedication to nonviolence, and he stands free of the political machinery that the election year 1958 made not only disreputable but irrelevant.¹¹

The long quotation had to be used because it is an answer in itself; an

¹⁰Peter Matthiessen, *Sal Si Puedes* (New York: Random House, 1969), p. 3.

¹¹*Ibid.*, pp. 28, 29-30.

answer in the man it talks about, an answer for the problems of all humanity, an answer in the movement and an answer in the hope it inspires in the midst of our sometimes hopeless situation.

Benefit to the Farm Worker

There is no doubt that the Farm Worker's Union has greatly benefited the worker. His wages are better and he has much better working conditions as well as protection he did not enjoy before as a farm worker. Through all these years and after many attempts at organizing the farm worker, he had been the worst paid and most mistreated employee in America. Edwin Markham could well have written "The Man with the Hoe" for him, for it so aptly describes him gazing at the ground. So to the farm worker, this Chicano movement is truly liberation. Not that it has already been won completely for it is still "not yet" to a great degree, but it is present already because hope which was lost has been restored. Above all, to a great degree the unquestioned power of the farm grower has now been broken. Says Matthiessen:

The provision of the NLRA [National Labor Relations Act] which excludes farm workers was excused by the bloody farm strikes of 1934, when the Communist label was firmly attached to 'agrarian reformers'; its continued existence three decades later is a reflection of the power of the growers, whose might and right have been dutifully affirmed by church and state. But since 1965, America's last bastion of uninhibited free enterprise has been shaken so hard by national publicity that both church and state are searching for safer positions. And this new hope for the farm workers has been brought not by the Communist agent that his

enemies have conjured up, nor even by a demagogue, but by a small, soft spoken Mexican-American migrant laborer who could never leave the fields long enough to get past the seventh grade.¹²

No wonder all Chicanos everywhere look up to Caesar Chavez.

A Personal Experience

It is easy for many of us Chicanos to get lost within middle-class America, ignore the subtle or hidden discrimination against us and forget our lowly background and our brethren who are still struggling against great odds. This writer was such a Chicano. But fate took me to Delano, Caesar Chavez, Dolores Huerta and the strike. Suddenly I found myself in the midst of farm workers who lived under the same conditions I had been brought up in and I thought had ended as I grew up. The only difference in the situation I found myself in now and the one I remembered as a child and youth was the geography and the different crops being harvested.

I have never been the same since I walked into that camp in Delano and met Caesar Chavez. I call that experience "my Moses experience," for it seemed to me that I was seeing my brethren in a state of being I had once been and did not think anyone should ever be. While it was a gradual and quiet confrontation with myself, it was also a revelation.

The answer, however, was not the confrontation with my situation of some years back. It was the response of those involved:

¹²*Ibid.*, p. 5.

Chicanos, Philipinos, Blacks, Anglos and others. Two facts stood out. One was that the "Huelga" was not merely a "Chicano" thing, although the majority of its adherents, of course, are Chicanos. The Chicano has always been the greater labor force in the Southwest. The other fact, which was much more significant was that of those who were involved, none could possibly profit. They were all volunteers. They all had poor sleeping quarters and all ate from the same supply of food, which was a poor person's diet. Those who were not actually farm workers, and there were many, were on the same equal basis with the farm workers, or rather, the farm worker was on the same equal basis with those who came from other walks of life merely as outside help.

The influence that the "Huelga" has had on this person, can be multiplied many times, for I have heard many others witness to that. Here at Claremont, a young man whose name I will not mention witnessed to his tremendous experience in living among the Delano group. This young man, like many other young men and women with the Huelga, came from Anglo middle-class society.

THE MAN AND THE METHOD

What makes Chavez and his movement a real answer to human need is the character of the man Caesar. The method he uses is consistent with his character.

The Man

There is no space available for a thorough description of

Caesar Chavez and we have already mentioned some of his qualities. Suffice it now to point to some more of those qualities which place him in an almost religious category, closer to a saint than anyone this writer has known.

A religious man. Caesar is a truly religious man in every sense of the word. For those who see the church as irrelevant today, let it be known that Caesar is a devout Catholic. He attends to his religious duties, not merely as a routine, but as though his whole being were a part of the service, mass, or religious meeting he attends. This is not, however, the reason for characterizing him as a religious man. It is that in Caesar his attending to religious practices and his life seem to be joined together as his whole life is.

Humility. One quality which I have not seen in any of our modern day leaders, which is attributed to Caesar and no one that I know of disputes it, is humility. Says Matthiessen, "Chavez is a plain-spoken man who does not waste his own time or his listener's with false humility, yet he is uncomfortable when the necessity arises to speak about himself, and may even emit a groan."¹³

Dedication. No doubt the one quality which has attracted so many to Caesar is dedication. He has definitely been grasped by an ultimate concern which seems to demand of him everything he has to give. And Caesar gives all he has and gives it almost joyfully. "He

¹³*Ibid.*, p. 25.

is entirely with the people," says Matthiessen,

. . . open to them, one with them, and at the same time that he makes them laugh, his gaze sees beyond them to something else. 'Without laying a cross on him,' Jim Drake says, 'Caesar is in theological terms, as nearly "a man for others" as you can find. In spite of all his personal problems--a very bad back, poverty, a large family--he does not allow his own life to get in the way.'¹⁴

Caesar's total identification with his people in dress, in living quarters, in work, in day by day living, leaves one no question about his dedication.

The Spiritual Presence manifest. It has already been said that Caesar is a man who has been grasped by an ultimate concern. Another way of saying it would be that he is a man of faith, for, according to Tillich, faith is ultimate concern. Seeing Caesar as the man of faith that he is, it should not be difficult to see him as one in whom the Spiritual Presence (The Holy Spirit) is manifest.

Paul Tillich says two things relevant to the statement we are making regarding the Spiritual Presence in the man Caesar Chavez. He says first, that, "faith is the state of being grasped by an ultimate concern."¹⁵ Secondly, Tillich says that "faith is the state of being grasped by the Spiritual Presence," and thirdly, that "love is the state of being taken by the Spiritual Presence into the transcendent unity of unambiguous life."¹⁶ The first two affirmations have already been made

¹⁴*Ibid.*, p. 172.

¹⁵Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963), III, 130, 144.

¹⁶*Ibid.*

about Chavez. That is, that he is a man ultimately concerned and that he has been grasped, in this context, by the Spiritual Presence. Can it further be said that the Spiritual Presence is manifest in him in his love or that he experiences unambiguous life? Perhaps another look at Caesar through the eyes of Peter Matthiessen could answer the question for us.

What welled out of him was a phenomenon much spoken of in a society afraid of its own hate, but one that I had never seen before--or not, at least, in anyone unswayed by drugs or aching youth: the simple love of man that accompanies some ultimate acceptance of oneself.

It is this love in Chavez that one sees and resists naming, because to name it is to cheapen it; not the addled love that hides self-pity but a love so clear in its intensity that it is monastic, even mystical. This intensity in Chavez has burned all his defenses away. Taking the workers' hands at church, his face was as fresh as the face of a man reborn.¹⁷

These are the qualities that move this writer to say that in this man is the answer to man's most profound questions of being. Not because Caesar himself is the answer, but because he points to something beyond him, something to which those beautiful human qualities in him are correlates. To know and truly understand Caesar is salvation. At least, salvation within the definition of Gustavo Gutierrez. To him, salvation is "the communion of men with God and the communion of men among themselves."¹⁸ Actually, the communion of man with God without the communion of men among themselves is an impossibility, for no one can love God and not love man, or vice versa.

¹⁷Matthiessen, p. 172.

¹⁸Gustavo Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation* New York: Orbis, 1973), p. 151.

The Method

It is difficult to separate Caesar Chavez and the "Huelga." He was in a sense, born with it and it with him. Yet there are qualities in this community which have become very much its own as a community and which answer some of the questions from the wider community in the "Chicano situation."

Brotherhood. In the "Huelga" community, in order to survive, brotherhood must be practiced. This is easier to do since everyone is there voluntarily. They may leave when they choose. There is no power to fight over since all are farm workers. There can be no inequality.

Since all those who participate in the union are together most of the time, of necessity they must also be together in spirit. But what joins them the most is the plight of the farm worker himself in his overall relationship to the situation. They all want the same thing, so when a victory is won, all rejoice; when a loss is sustained, all lose.

In this community all are united because the issue is one: the liberation of the farm worker. Those who are there as volunteers, but are not farm workers are also consumed by this one issue. The role of the farm worker is universal, the easy identification with "The Man with the Hoe," which speaks of other times and other people attest to it. The fact that the community is totally integrated with Blacks, Chicanos, Anglos, Philipinos and others, is symbolically responsive

to the cry of the whole world for brotherhood.

Personhood. I know of no organization, perhaps not even the church, which so consciously seeks to deal with every one as a real person. Chavez feels that a movement has to be free of bureaucracy and close to people. The most vivid example of this is in Chavez' refusal to give his members numbers. He says, "Here we have a rule." "We resist giving our members numbers." He goes on to explain, "Once we do that we are frightened that we will become one mass. One ball of nothing. It's easy nowadays. We have 20,000 members. And with all the paper work and accounting that has to be done, it would be easier to use numbers. We refuse!" He goes on finally to say, "Our people are human! They are not numbers!"¹⁹

This striving for personhood, or in more simple terms, this constant struggle for the dignity of the farm worker, is in reality the struggle of modern man. This is also an answer to man's plight.

Communion. One of the most amazing achievements of the "Huelga" community is communion amongst themselves and symbolically with God. The reason for considering this amazing is that as there are varying ethnic groups in the community, so are there varying church denominations. For the most part it can be said that the Roman Catholic church predominates. But there are many Protestants and these from different denominations. Yet, most of the great moments of the "Huelga" are celebrated with religious services. Usually the service is called

¹⁹Steiner, p. 296.

Mass, but there is participation by Protestant ministers. At times services are held in which Protestant ministers officiate. The songs and liturgies, prayers, etc., have been prepared for the movement and are not necessarily typical of any particular denomination. All the materials used are special but can be used comfortably in any setting, Protestant or Catholic.

The breaking of Caesar's record-breaking fast (it lasted four days more than Gandhi's famous hunger strike in 1924) is truly an example of this spirit of communion which in the farm worker's community breaks all barriers. This was a fusion of politics and religion and of ecumenicity at its best. The fast was broken by taking communion. Caesar took his first morsel of bread from Chris Hartmire, a Presbyterian minister who was administering communion to him and Senator Robert Kennedy. Both Kennedy and Chavez are Roman Catholic.

That is also an answer to us as denominations and as individuals with different faiths. It is a direct answer to the prayer for more ecumenicity. Finally, it is a response to that separation or division between the personal and the social gospel.

Non-violence. The commitment to non-violence which all members of the Farm Workers Union and all volunteers in the movement must make, has not been easy for the Huelga people, since they have been caught between two violent forces: the Teamsters Union on the one hand, and the law enforcement officers on the other. In actuality, these two and the farm growers are all in the same camp and have joined forces to try to destroy the United Farm Workers Union. The Teamsters Union

has been known throughout its history for its violent methods and the police, with very few exceptions, have traditionally sided with the more permanent and powerful residents who would be the growers. Thus the "Huelga" people have found it difficult to maintain their non-violent stand in the face of open violence from the other parties.

The price of the commitment was high, particularly to Chavez himself. In mid-February of 1968, he found it necessary to go on a fast, but not as a hunger strike but as a penitence for the mounting cries for violence from a large number of the community. Says, Matthiessen,

Chavez decided on the fast as a kind of penitence for the belligerence that had developed in his own union and a commitment to non-violence everywhere.

From every point of view, the twenty-five day fast was the most serious risk that Chavez had ever taken, and it placed the hard work of six years in the balance. Chavez himself speaks mildly of the fast, but his people don't feel mild about it, even now; it split the Union down the middle.²⁰

All that type of cost the non-violence stance has been held.

In the midst of all the violence that has been brought about by the "Chicano situation" both by Anglos to maintain their status or by Chicanos responding in violence to the anger welled up inside because of the violence and injustice of the Anglo, the small Delano community has something to say which can be said in the words of Jesus: "All those who take the sword, shall perish with the sword."²¹

²⁰Matthiessen, pp. 177-78.

²¹Matthew 26:52.

THE MOVEMENT AND THE SPIRITUAL PRESENCE

As was said at the outset of this dissertation, the conclusions drawn here are those which spring from the faith of the one writing. It is my contention that the "Huelga" movement, beginning with its leader, Chavez is a "Spiritual community." In other words, it has been grasped by the Spiritual Presence, or putting it another way, God is present and at work in this community.

A Spiritual Community in the "Huelga"

Paul Tillich makes a distinction between two types of Spiritual community. These two types are expressed in the terms, "latent" and "manifest." He says,

The concrete occasion for the distinction between the latent and the manifest church comes with the encounter of groups outside the organized churches who show the power of the New Being in an impressive way. There are youth alliances, friendship groups, educational, artistic, and political movements, and, even more obviously individuals without any visible relation to each other in whom the Spiritual Presence's impact is felt, although they are indifferent or hostile to all overt expressions of religion.²²

It is my contention that the "Huelga" community is one of these groups which would have to be considered latent, since it makes no claim to being a religious movement.

Marks of the Spiritual Community

The marks of the "Spiritual community," according to Tillich

²²Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, III, 153.

are: faith, love, unity and universality.²³ These are quite evident in the "Huelga" community, as has been described above, for it has been shown that there is ultimate concern, that love has kept the group together through all kinds of adversities, that only in a very solid unity could the Huelga have survived, and above all we have shown the symbolic universality of the community.

SUMMARY

In this chapter we have presented some of the answers that the Chicano is giving to the "situation," first by describing and analyzing some of the existing movements in Chicanismo, and secondly by discussing three of the most well known leaders and briefly describing their understanding of the "Chicano situation" and their involvement in it. The answers from these movements and leaders, though in many cases could be accepted as viable alternatives, and certainly part of which I would subscribe to, were seen upon analysis as questions rather than answers. This in part is because the writer continues to seek the more ultimate answer, which to him can only be found in the Christian message, or in theology, as it were.

In discussing the different movements the Huelga was left as the last for in it the writer feels are some of the answers which ultimately come from the Christian message through what he believes is the "Spiritual Presence" working in both Caesar Chavez and his movement which at its best, fulfills the criteria of a "Spiritual community."

²³*Ibid.*, III, 155-57.

Chapter 6

THE THEOLOGICAL ANSWERS

This chapter proposes to show theology's response to the existential questions about God, man, and salvation implied in the "Chicano situation."

GOD

"The God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob"¹ is more the God of the Chicano than anybody else's. This statement can be made not because of the Chicanos themselves, but because of the nature of God Himself.

The God of the Chicano

James H. Cone speaks of Black theology as survival theology.² This Chicano has survived all these years in the faith that God is the God of the oppressed; the God of the *underdog*. I could always identify with the underdog, and thus with the Israelites in Egypt. Consequently it was easy to claim the God of Israel as my God.

A cry for deliverance. The beginning of the Israelite's

¹Exodus 3:6.

²James H. Cone, *A Black Theology of Liberation* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1970), p. 34.

relationship to God, was their cry for deliverance. Martin Noth says "the time when the Israelites were 'brought out of Egypt' by their God appears as the beginning of their relationship to God."³

This seems to say that the Israelites became God's people at the point of their need for liberation. Yahweh says to Moses:

'I have seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters; I know their suffering, and I have come down to deliver them out of the land of the Egyptian, and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey. . . .

And now, behold, the cry of the people of Israel has come to me, and I have seen the oppression with which the Egyptians oppress them.'⁴

The God of the underdog. From my early days in seminary and a course in "The History of Israel" I learned that the one thing Exodus said very clearly to all people always is that "God is the God of the underdog." The whole relationship of the people of Israel and Yahweh is predicated on the suffering of the people. Yahweh very plainly says to Moses that he has come to deliver the people because he has heard their cries. He has seen their oppression. God cannot see man enslaved. Wherever man is oppressed, God hears his cries. The experience of Moses in the Mount of Horeb can be seen as God revealing himself to Moses on behalf of the people of Israel. But it must be remembered that the Israelites were not chosen arbitrarily, or for any particular merit on their part, but because they were a people

³Martin Noth, *The History of Israel* (New York: Harper & Row, 1958), p. 111.

⁴Exodus 3:7-9.

oppressed.

A Chicano God? Let it be understood that there is a big difference between the God of the Chicano and a "Chicano God." I can believe in God as the God of the Chicano but cannot believe in God as a "Chicano God," as Cone believes that it is imperative that God be known as a "Black God." He says,

Because black people have come to know themselves as *black*, and because that blackness is the cause of their own love of themselves and hatred of whiteness, God himself must be known only as he reveals himself in his blackness.

. . . Because God has made the goal of black people his own goal, Black Theology believes that it is not only appropriate but necessary to begin the doctrine of God with and insistence on his blackness.⁵

To make God a Chicano God would mean to attribute to him bad human qualities which to begin with he did not have even in his human form in Jesus as the Christ. Furthermore, to make of God a "Chicano God" would mean to make him a part of our own human biases, hates and prejudices. To wit the above quotation of Cone's where he claims that the affirmation of the Blacks' blackness means love of themselves and *hatred* of whiteness.

To make of God a "Chicano God" as Cone makes him a "Black God" would mean to particularize him to such an extent that He loses his universality. He ceases to be the God of all human kind and therefore the God of the oppressed, universally. Cone seems to lose track of his very argument that "God must identify with the oppressed," for the oppressed are not only *Black* people but Jewish people (White), poor

⁵Cone, p. 120.

people (all races and colors and creeds), imprisoned people, etc. To seek to make of God a "Black God," or a "Chicano God" in my case, would mean to leave him back in Egypt around the year 1,000 B.C. as the God of Israel only.

What allows me to claim the God of the Hebrew experience as my God and liberator is precisely that he is neither a Hebrew God nor a Black or Chicano God, but the God of the oppressed of whatever race, in whatever geographical area, under whatever government the oppressed may be.

God is love. When God said to Moses, "I have seen the affliction of *my* people . . . ," the use of the possessive pronoun was not meant for exclusivity or arbitrariness in choice or quality of the people God was claiming. What was meant was *love*. God loved this people and would not stand by and see them suffer.

Notice two things about God's revelation to the people of Israel, or his appearance to Moses, as we most commonly know it. The first thing is that God initiates the encounter. Though there seems to be an implication that Moses was seeking this God, in actuality (according to the narrative) God first attracted Moses' attention. Then in relation to the Israelites themselves God says, " . . . and *I* have *come down* to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians." He is saying that he has moved, he has "*come down*" toward them. "Symbolically speaking," says Tillich, "God answers man's questions, and

under the impact of God's answers man asks them."⁶ This means that even in the cries of the Israelites God was implied. Says Paul, "Likewise the spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words."⁷

From the beginning of the relationship God's "my" is not so much possession as it is love, and it begins with his presence in intercession in the very cries of the people.

A second thing that must be noted in God's revelation here is that he does not send Moses the Israelites to deliver from the hand of the Egyptian, but that he sends him to inform the Israelites that he, Yahweh, has "come down" to deliver them. To the oppressed, in this case the Chicano, this means that it is not the weakness of the Chicano which will be contending with the oppressor, but the power of the love of God for the oppressed.

The God of the Anglo (The Oppressor)

Yahweh is always seen as the God of the Hebrews enslaved in Egypt and as the enemy of the Egyptians and their gods. This writer has claimed him as the God of the Chicanos because He is the God of the oppressed. He is on "our side." But if all this is true, who is the God of the oppressor? In Chicano theology, who is the God of the

⁶Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), I, 61.

⁷Romans 8:26.

Anglo?

The answer to that question must be: the same God. Yahweh was also the God of Pharaoh, ultimately. Had he not been so, he could not have liberated the Israelites. In one of the dialogues between Yahweh and Moses, Yahweh says to Moses, " . . . but I will harden his [Pharaoh's] heart, so that he will not let the people go,"⁸ which means power over the Pharaoh also.

An Anglo God? The idea of an "Anglo God," or as Cone would say, a "white" God must be discounted for the same reasons as the "Chicano God" was discounted above. To speak of a God of any color or any race, is to be guilty of the same racist attitude which has made for the "Chicano situation." When every ethnic group must have his own God in his own image we have a modern pantheon of gods fighting among each other for their particular people. In the Chicano situation there is the advantage of Chicanos being Roman Catholic and thus having the "Virgin" to appear as the "Virgin Morena" (dark complexion Virgin), not affecting the nature of God. The Chicano does not think of a Chicano Christ or a Chicano God. In other words, there is no brown God or Christ. There is no "White God." Perhaps there was a "White god" (with small "g") but he died and was buried, according to the "White" theologians of the "God is dead" movement. Perhaps he died; that little White god, that he may become a part of the real God; the God of the Black, the Chicano, and the Anglo.

⁸Exodus 4:21.

God and the oppressor. When Yahweh acts to liberate the Israelites, he acts upon the whole situation. "He makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust."⁹ When God acts on the liberation of the Chicano from oppression, he acts upon the Anglo, the oppressor. He becomes the God of the Anglo especially at the point where he takes away from him his role as oppressor. God breaks the bondage of the oppressed, and the oppressor is liberated from his dehumanizing role of oppressor.

As we said in the first part of this dissertation, neither the oppressed nor the oppressor are fulfilling their true humanity. Liberation opens the door to both oppressor and oppressed to enter into a full humanity. God, the same God, is the God of both the Chicano and the Anglo. In a sense he is not on the side of either. He abhors oppression, therefore he seeks the liberation of the oppressed. He wants every man to attain unto his full humanity, therefore he would take away the oppressed from the oppressor that they both may become fully human.

The God of the "Chicano Situation"

No God would be God if he were not Lord of all; if he were not the God of the whole "Chicano situation" seeking justice for the Chicano, which means making the Anglo just and righteous. Both, Anglo and Chicano must pray to the same God, for He is just and therefore would bring justice.

⁹Matthew 5:45.

Two statements above require qualification. One is that "it is the power of God and not the Chicano's weakness, that will bring about liberation. The other is that "both Anglo and Chicano must pray to the *same* God for he is just and would *give* us justice." Both of these statements could be misunderstood as advocating a passive role for men. This is not the case. When this writer advocates prayer, he means by prayer, an active participation inspired by God in that which one prays for. Since God is the God of both Chicano and Anglo, he moves the Chicano to seek justice and moves the Anglo to do justice.

The Holy Spirit

The previous chapter speaks about the specific way in which the "Divine Presence" is moving in Caesar Chavez, in some other leaders and in the "Huelga" and other movements. A Chicano theology calls for a doctrine of that "Divine Presence" in relation to the "Chicano situation." We use the term "Holy Spirit" in the topic because it is the most common designation for the third person of the Trinity, but the terms, "Divine Presence" or "Spiritual Presence" mean the same to this writer and are used interchangeably.

The Holy Spirit and the Chicano. The Holy Spirit works in the Chicano in two ways.

(1) It convicts the Chicano of his Chicanismo. By this is meant an acceptance of his humble immediate ancestry, his material poverty, his identification with the poor and the lowly, but also his rich history and the wealth of the culture in which he now lives. He

is no longer afraid of saying, "I am a Chicano."

It does not give him what the Anglo continues to say he wants to give the Chicano; pride in being a Chicano, for no one need be proud of an accident of birth which he had nothing to do with. Pride, traditionally, has been considered a sin. Pride, the way the "Raza" preaches it, which is pride in the "Raza," to this writer, has an element of superiority in it, which cannot be identified with the work of the Holy Spirit.

The Divine, or Spiritual Presence in the Chicano means power. It is the power that gives him the courage to be a Chicano. In other words, the power to be himself at any cost, even to the extent of risking his own life to express himself in the power of his full Chicano humanity. The Divine Presence in the Chicano gives him the power to see his potential and to seek to attain unto that potential. Through the power of the Divine Presence in him, the Chicano ceases to be afraid of the anti-Chicano forces which have proclaimed him inferior and made him ashamed of his heritage--his Chicanismo. The Holy Spirit empowers him to fight these forces of evil against his humanity with a true empowerment and not of the kind the Anglo claims to give him.

(2) A second way in which the Divine Presence works in the Chicano or in Chicanismo, is by giving him the power to rebel; the power to respond to the Anglo oppression with a resounding "No." The Divine Presence is at work in the individual leaders and in groups and meetings where Chicanos decide their action against the oppressor. In some that presence is conscious, but for the most part individuals

and groups may be totally unaware of the work of the Spirit in them. Thus whatever is done for the Chicano's well-being, is done ultimately by the Spirit of God. The same Spirit prompts the cry for deliverance and gives the courage to risk life itself for Chicano liberation.

The Holy Spirit and the Anglo in the "Chicano situation." As the Holy Spirit is present with the Chicano as he works against the forces that seek to oppress him, so is it at work in the Anglo also to concede and to suffer the slings and arrows of the angry Chicano whom the Spirit moves to defend his dignity, to maintain his personhood and gain his liberation.

But the Holy Spirit not only works to change the heart of the Anglo that he may let go of those he oppresses, it also moves him to seek knowledge of the Chicano as Chicano; his culture, his language, his plight. The Holy Spirit moves the Anglo to take up, himself, the cause of the Chicano and to risk his own life for that cause. The Holy Spirit convinces the Anglo of the justice of the Chicano cause and his own need to identify with him for his own salvation.

The Holy Spirit in the "Chicano situation." The Holy Spirit works on both Anglo and Chicano for their mutual benefit. It works by giving them an insight into the one's potential contribution to the other.

The vision (I call it conversion) of Peter in regards to Cornelius is a case in point.¹⁰ The Holy Spirit was moving Cornelius

¹⁰Acts 10:1ff.

toward Peter because Peter could be the bearer of salvation for him. But Peter had his objections to associating with persons such as Cornelius--a Gentile, a non-Jew. It was against his principles, worse yet, it was against his religious understanding. Through the work of the Holy Spirit, Peter is given a vision. In essence, the vision tells him not to consider Cornelius, his culture, his customs, what he eats, or any part of him, common or unclean. In other words, accept him as a human being. Accept his culture, his customs, his food, etc. Accept *him*.

God in the person of the Holy Spirit is at work in the "Chicano situation" both with the Chicano and with the Anglo. He is in their relationship and moves them toward each other in search of their brotherhood.

MAN

A Creature of God

Needless to say, man is a creature of God. To use a syllogism: a human being is God's creature. Anglos and Chicanos are human beings, therefore, they are creatures of God. But both Anglo and Chicano need to be reminded of this. The Anglo needs to be reminded that the Chicano is a human being and that he himself (the Anglo) cannot be a true human being until he recognizes the Chicano as a fellow human being. The Chicano needs to know it because he has been so suppressed that many times he thinks he is an inferior being. Our brother Elias Galvan, related to the real Chicano himself, considers the Chicano

inferior. So do the majority of Anglos. So the Chicano must remind himself that he is a creature of God.

God created me. The Chicano must say, "God created me and God wants my liberation." We return again to the symbolism in Moses' encounter with God. Let it be borne in mind that Moses here is identified with the oppressed. He says to God: "Oh, my Lord, I am not eloquent, either heretofore or since thou hast spoken to thy servant; but I am slow of speech and of tongue."¹¹ This describes the feeling of the Chicano who has come to believe the myth of his inferiority. God answers Moses' feeling of inferiority thus: "Who has made man's mouth? Who makes him deaf or dumb or seeing, or blind? Is it not I, the Lord?"¹²

God created him. For the Anglo within the "Chicano situation," it is necessary that he hear the word of the Lord, "God created the Chicano." Not "God created the Chicano *too*," as if the Chicano was an afterthought in God's creation of man. The Anglo must hear again and again that the Chicano is a creature of God. It is to him that the word refers when it says, "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them."¹³

Chicano theology must remind the Anglo also what a Chicano is *not*. He is not a thing. He is not a beast of burden. He is not a

¹¹Exodus 4:10.

¹²*Ibid.*

¹³Genesis 1:27.

servant (that is, not merely on the basis that he is a Chicano). He is not a "meskin." The Chicano is not an oversexed or totally sexual creature who does everything with his body because he has no mental ability. A Chicano is not an inferior being. He was made "a little less than God."¹⁴ A Chicano is a creature of God, created in God's own image.

Created as brothers and sisters. The story of the Tower of Babel does more than merely attempt to explain to those people of old why there were so many languages. In showing the confusion of languages, it shows that before they were all one. So says God, in the story "Behold, they are one people, and they have all one language. . . ."

The Hebrews, as we can gather from the record of revelation, never thought in terms of different creations for all the different existing peoples. All the creation mythology points to the creation of humankind, not the creation of Hebrew man as such. The name Adam means either "man" or "mankind."

Chicano theology demands an acceptance of the fact, not only that we are all created by the same God, but that we were created as brothers and sisters, and we are not complete, our humanity is not totally fulfilled, unless we live as brothers and sisters.

Chicano Liberation

Man, within the "Chicano situation," must be liberated man.

¹⁴Psalms 8:5.

According to Gustavo Gutierrez, to the Hebrew, their liberation from slavery from Egypt and their creation were one and the same thing. He says:

The creative act is linked, almost identified with, the act which freed Israel from slavery in Egypt.

The 'waters of the great abyss' are those which enveloped the world and from which creation arose, but they are also the Red Sea which the Jews crossed to begin the Exodus. Creation and liberation from Egypt are but one salvific act.¹⁵

This means that as long as the Chicano is not liberated, he has not, and will not attain unto the full measure of his true humanity. In the "Chicano situation" as we have described it, the Anglo cannot attain unto the full measure of his true humanity either, if there is no liberation for the Chicano. In other words, in the "Chicano situation" the salvation of the Anglo is dependent on the liberation of the Chicano.

Liberation under guidelines. Chicano theology refuses Anglo-initiated, Anglo-controlled attempts at "self-determination" for the Chicano, for all these are ultimately determined by the Anglo and not by the supposed self-determined Chicano. Witness to this the "guidelines" syndrome. The Chicano gets fundings, projects, personnel, etc.--all with "guidelines." But even the behavior of the Chicano, when he accepts this type of "liberation" or "freedom" or "self-determination," is under the guidelines of the Anglo. It is these subtle acts of oppression which this Chicano theology responds to with a resounding

¹⁵Gustavo Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation* (New York: Orbis, 1973), p. 155.

"No." The Chicano was also made to "have dominion . . ." The Chicano cannot accept any liberation under guidelines. It must be a thing of his own heart. Paulo Freire says:

Freedom is acquired by conquest, not by gift. It must be pursued constantly and responsibly. Freedom is not an ideal located outside of man; nor is it an idea which becomes myth. It is rather the indispensable condition for the quest for human completion.¹⁶

That type of freedom, which is the only true freedom, has its cost which must be borne by both the Chicano and the Anglo; the oppressed and the oppressor.

The cost. Hagel says,

It is solely by risking life that freedom is obtained; . . . the individual who has not staked his life may, no doubt, be recognized as a person; but he has not attained the truth of this recognition as an independent self-consciousness.¹⁷

This is to say that unless a person has the courage to say "give me liberty or give me death," he cannot attain his full potential as a human being. Jesus himself said that, "he who would save his life shall lose it, but he who loses his life for my sake shall find it." Speaking of the cost Blacks must pay for their freedom, James H. Cone says,

The black man prefers to die rather than surrender to some other value . . . To be human is to find something worth dying for. When the black man rebels at the risk of death, he forces white society to look at him, to recognize him. To take his being into account, to admit that he *is*.¹⁸

¹⁶Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972), p. 31.

¹⁷Hagel as quoted in *Ibid.*, p. 20.

¹⁸James H. Cone, *Black Theology and Black Power* (New York: Seabury Press, 1969), p. 7.

The Chicano too, must awake to the realization that that is the cost of freedom, and that only in having the courage to risk, at least his well-being; his position, his job, etc., can he find life. Chicano theology says that a true liberation cannot be a gift from the Anglo.

The Israelites had it pretty good within the Egyptian government up until the time when there was a change of kings. The oppression then became unbearable. The freedom that was enjoyed by the Israelites under the agreement between Joseph and the Pharaoh was a gift. It was, to a certain extent, freedom; but a freedom which was dependent on the Pharaoh. The freedom won at a great cost of life and suffering, remained as long as it continued to be defended at whatever cost.

According to Chicano theology, the Chicano, or man in the "Chicano situation" is only "a little less than God" and therefore strives toward attaining that. Part of that concept means being a free being.

THE CHICANO AND JESUS AS THE CHRIST

The Chicano has not known the Christ of liberation, for both the Roman Catholic church and the Protestant church have failed to proclaim him.

Christ and the Roman Catholic Chicano

As is well known, the majority of Chicanos are Roman Catholic. The closest object to their faith is the "Virgen Guadaluana" or

"Virgen de Guadalupe." The "Virgen de Guadalupe" is the "Virgen Morena" which roughly translated means "brown virgin" or "dark complexion virgin."

The Roman Catholic, in effect, see the virgin in the place of Christ. It was the virgin that they identified with them in her appearance in their own land and in their own color. In Mexico, it was under the banner of the "Guadalupana" that "El Cura Hidalgo" (priest Hidalgo) led the poor and the oppressed in their struggle for freedom. The poor Indian and Mestizo peons had been given the "Virgen" as the dominant figure among divine beings. For all practical purposes she symbolized "God with them." She was really a liberating Christ.

Here in the United States the "Virgen de Guadalupe" continued to be the dominant figure in Chicano Roman Catholic worship but she was no longer identified with the land because she had not appeared in this land. Her identification was with the individual suffering of the Chicano Catholic. Caesar Chavez uses a banner with an imprint of the "Virgen," but her presence is one of comfort and not of liberation.

Christ and the Chicano Protestant

The Chicano Protestant's first affirmation as a *Chicano Protestant* is a refutation of Mariology in its particularity, which is the "Virgen." In other words, the great distinction between Roman Catholic and Protestant Chicanos is that the Protestant does not

"believe in" the "virgen." The central figure in all Chicano Protestant worship is Jesus Christ.

The most popular hymns in all Chicano Protestant churches today are to Jesus or to Christ or about them. The emphasis in preaching is on salvation through Christ only. The hymns translated from the English language are those that are Christ-centered. But the Christ that the Protestant has known, has not been the Christ of liberation. It has been a Christ of comfort. It has been a Christ who keeps the Chicano happy in spite of his circumstances. He identifies with Chicano suffering, but he accompanies him within that suffering. He is not a liberating Christ.

The following hymn by Vicente Mendoza, which is the single most popular and most Chicano hymn you can find in the Chicano Protestant church, presents the Christ of the Chicano.

Jesus es mi Rey soberano,
Mi gozo es cantar su loor;
Es Rey, y me ve cual hermano,
Es Rey y me imparte su amor.
Dejando su trono de gloria,
me vino a sacar de la escoria,
Y yo soy feliz, y yo soy feliz, por el.

Jesus es mi Amigo anhelado,
Y en sombras o en luz siempre va
Paciente y humilde a mi lado,
Y ayuda y consuelo me da.
Por eso constante lo sigo,
porque el es mi Rey y mi Amigo
Y yo soy feliz, Y yo soy feliz, por el

?Senor, que pudiera yo darte
Por tanta bondad para mi;
Me basta servirte y amarte?
?Es todo entregarme yo a ti?

Entonces acepta mi vida,
que a ti solo queda rendida,
Pues yo soy feliz, Pues yo soy feliz por ti.¹⁹

Translation:

Jesus is my sovereign King.
My joy is in singing his praise
He's King but he sees me as brother
He's King, yet he gives me his love
He left his king's throne and his glory
to come pull me out of my sin
How happy I am, How happy I am, for him.

Jesus is my most desired Friend,
He's with me in shadows and light
Patiently, humbly, right with me
he comforts and helps me along
That's why I faithfully follow,
Because he's my King and my Friend.
And how happy I am, How happy I am, for him.

Lord, what now could I give you
For all this your goodness to me
Is it enough, just to serve you and love you?
And to turn my life over to you?
Then, please accept this, my life,
which I render now here to you,
But how happy I am, But how happy I am, for you.

To the Chicano Protestant, this Christ was very relevant, since He met us where we were in our suffering and pain and gave us strength to bear it. In past years, not seeing an end to oppression in sight and finding this strength in Christ for the moment, we lived, as the hymn says "feliz por El" (happily for Him).

The Christ of Chicano Theology

Christ in Chicano theology must be the one who proclaims the

¹⁹ *Himnario Metodista* (Special publication of the Rio Grande Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church, San Antonio, Texas, 1955), #78.

liberation of the Chicano, for only thus is he the Christ proclaimed in Luke:

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me to
preach good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim release
to the captives
and recovering of sight to the blind,
to set at liberty those who are oppressed,
to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.²⁰

In our doctrine of God we said that God must have jurisdiction in power over the Anglo (the oppressor), thus being his God also. Christ, the Messiah, is "God with us" proclaiming himself to the oppressor that he may liberate him from the dehumanizing oppression in his oppressor's role, and proclaiming himself as liberator of the oppressed from his dehumanizing state as the oppressed.

God as the liberator of both Chicano (oppressed) and Anglo (oppressor), in Christ, seeks to bring about this liberation. He frees man in the "Chicano situation" from estrangement, from oppression, from racism, etc. Paul Tillich says it as follows,

Christianity asserts that Jesus is the Christ. The term 'the Christ' points by marked contrast to man's existential situation. For the Christ, the Messiah, is he who is supposed to bring the 'new eon,' the universal regeneration, the new reality. New reality presupposes an old reality; and this old reality, according to prophetic and apocalyptic descriptions, is the state of the estrangement of man and his world from God. This strange world is ruled by structures of evil, symbolized as demonic powers. They rule individual souls, nations, and even nature. They produce anxiety in all its forms. It is

²⁰Luke 4:18-19.

the task of the Messiah to conquer them and to establish a new reality from which the demonic powers or the structures of destruction are excluded.²¹

If Christ is the one who brings in the "new eon" and the "new eon" drives out the forces of evil and destruction, in the "Chicano situation" it means bringing about brotherhood and equality as the forces of prejudice, discrimination and inequality are driven out.

Christ, then, is a liberating Christ. In Him, the "Chicano situation" is overcome.

REVELATION AND THE CHURCH

Christ and the Church

The New Being. Paul Tillich says that, "There is one answer . . . which is the basic content of the Christian faith, and that is that Jesus is the Christ, the bringer of the New Being." He goes on to relate this to the churches saying,

There are many possible ways of expressing this assertion, but in a church there is no way of avoiding it. In this sense one can say that the church is a community of those who affirm that Jesus is the Christ.²²

We stated above that Chicano theology sees Christ as a liberating Christ in whom the "Chicano situation" is overcome. To go further, this theology sees the Church, or to be more specific the churches, as the community or communities in which the situation is first overcome, since the Christ we know is the one proclaimed by the

²¹Tillich, II, 27.

²²*Ibid.*, III, 174.

Church.

All one in Christ. According to St. Paul, there can be no prejudice or discrimination in the Church. He says, "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ, have put on Christ. There is neither Greek nor Jew, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ."²³ Commitment to Christ, then, means commitment to the liberation of the Chicano for there can be no feeling of superiority or inferiority in those who know Jesus as the Christ.

Interdependency between Christ and the church. Our knowledge of the Christ has come to us through the Church. The Christ we know is more the one proclaimed in the kerygma of the Church, than the Jesus of Nazareth. Bultmann puts it this way:

New Testament theology began with the earliest Church, not with the message of Jesus, for New Testament theology is a justification of the Christian faith. Further, it was the earliest Church which proclaimed Jesus Christ to be God's method of salvation--not the historical Jesus.²⁴

Tillich claims that, "According to later symbolism, the Christ is the head of the church, which is his body. As such they are necessarily interdependent."²⁵

The Church has been the recipient and the depository of reve-

²³Galatians 3:28.

²⁴Rudolf Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951), I, 3.

²⁵Tillich, II, 99.

lation, first as the people of Israel, "God's people" and later in the beginning of the Christian Church as the "New Israel." Consequently, when it comes to the Revelation of Christ we must look to the church, for without the Church he would not be the Christ, and without the Christ, the Church would not be.

The Churches' Failure

No doubt the churches have failed their Christ insofar as he seeks man's liberation.

Criticism. The churches are justly criticized both externally and internally for not being completely integrated churches. The Church itself, is considered as lagging behind in the overall movement toward integration. We are using integration here, more as a symbol of true brotherhood than as a simple social integration. The churches simply have not shown the Chicano that he is seen as an equal; as a child of God. The churches have seen the Chicano as an inferior being. They have seen him as an object of their goodness and benevolence. They have sponsored him, funded him, patronized him, etc., but they have never allowed him the freedom to be a real part of the churches and express his Chicanismo with all its attendant negations of existing Anglo values, and its contributions to the overall life of the church.

A church divided. The criticism of the Church has, instead of moving toward reformation, divided the church into two areas. On the one hand are those who would do their worshipping inside a building

and concern themselves with the Gospel as it affects the individual. On the other hand are those who want to "go about doing good" through social action but are ignoring the very source of all worthwhile actions in any area. The first group would have the Christ described above who would allow them the luxury of being good oppressors. Do all they can for the Chicano as long as he keeps his place. The second group are, as someone has described them, "cut flowers." Their Christ is one who has nothing to do with God, and their actions have no rootage in the Christian faith.

The tragedy of the division mentioned above is that it is a total loss to the churches and to the Chicanos. The fact is that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is one that demands both areas of life. It demands the individual and collective encounter with God, for sustenance and power, and this power naturally turns into action for man's well-being which cannot tolerate oppression.

Much can be said on the failure of the churches, but that is not the intention of this statement. The above is merely a recognition of the failure of the church, that it can be said, that in spite of that failure, Chicano theology sees the Church as the living institution through which the "Chicano situation" can be overcome.

The Churches' Potential

The word "success" could well be used in this context of the potential of the churches, but there is a danger in seeing the churches' success, as that experienced in the fifties and early sixties, which

was more material than anything else. For this reason we use the word potential to point to the churches' possibilities for a total commitment to Jesus as the Christ, which would preclude action toward Chicano liberation.

Preaching Christ. The church is the only institution which is geared to constantly proclaim Jesus as the Christ and to ask for commitment to Him. Of those who are already a part of the Church, very few have made a commitment to Jesus as the Christ, yet they have made a decision to be a part of the Church, which means being a part of a group which collectively claims a commitment to the Christ. This is why it is so important for all ministers to become aware of the "Chicano situation," that they may be able to preach the Christ who brings liberation to their brother and their brother's brother; the Chicano. Paul simply says, "And how are they to hear without a preacher?"²⁶ I would add a further question: "How can they preach the Gospel in its totality if they are unaware of the "Chicano situation" being right in its midst?" Through the Church, the Gospel of liberation can be preached to both the Anglo and the Chicano. To the Anglo that he may come under conviction of the evils of oppression of which he is a part, and to the Chicano, that he may become aware of the power in Christ to stand up to the oppressor in the true freedom Christ has brought for him.

²⁶Romans 10:14c.

The Spiritual community. Every church has the potential to become a Spiritual community, or a part of *The Spiritual community*. The Spiritual community has been discussed in other contexts in this dissertation, but it is necessary that it be seen as the potential of each church in this new context, for it had been discussed more as an unconscious state in a group. Here we want it to be seen by the churches as the greatest of possibilities in their experiences.

Chicano theology sees the churches as potential Spiritual communities, and thus nuclei of individuals whose commitment to the Christ is total and who see their task as that of relating other individuals to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus the Christ. To seek the encounter of all with God in Jesus Christ.

The Spiritual community through its concern for its own spiritual well-being and concern and its concern for the Chicano, expresses God's love and concern for the Chicano.

The churches in society. The term "churches" with a small letter has been used that abstraction may be avoided in an attempt to define "The Church" with a capital letter and the such. This statement is addressed to the very real existent Christian churches of whatever size or denomination. For when we come to the particular, the churches have been a very real part of the "Chicano situation" and usually in a very negative way. At the same time, it is within the power of these churches under the impact of the Holy Spirit and through a true faith in Jesus as the Christ and commitment to Him, to turn the tide and to become positively involved in the liberation of the Chicano. Another

way of saying it is that these very same churches at their best (the best is what we all strive for), have the potential for being the communities in which the Chicano situation can be overcome. Lewis Joseph Sherrill, speaking on the Christian community and its functions, says,

At its best, in exercising its great function of moral reminder the church stands in the midst of the City of Man and calls upon it to become the City of God. At its best, too, this is no crying out of 'holier than thou.' For living in the midst of a disordered society in which it participates, it transcends itself by its prophetic word to itself and to the people of its day, speaking forth concerning men's sin and calling for repentance.²⁷

Through its preaching of Jesus as the Christ and its experiencing of Spiritual community, the hope for the Chicano and his plight is in the Church, as the churches come under the impact of the Holy Spirit.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In this final chapter, in seeking theological answers to the "Chicano situation" the conclusion has been reached that it is necessary to see our doctrine of God, Man and Jesus Christ from within the "Chicano situation" itself. God is manifested as on the side of the oppressed, but as the God of both the oppressed and the oppressor. God as Holy Spirit works on the oppressor to relinquish his role as oppressor. He at the same time brings the Chicano under conviction of his Chicanismo, his true identity. This doctrine of man, by the same token has shown that the Chicano must affirm himself as God's creation

²⁷Lewis Joseph Sherrill, *The Gift of Power* (New York: Macmillan, 1961), p. 55.

in God's own image, and the Anglo must recognize the Chicano as God's child the same as he is.

Christ is "God with us." Therefore he suffers with the oppressed and seeks his liberation. Commitment to Jesus as the Christ means commitment to the liberation of the Chicano. Finally, this Christ is the proclamation of the Christian Church. Christ and the Church are interdependent. The one is not without the other. Since there is this relationship between Christ and the Church, Chicano theology sees the Church, and more specifically the churches as communities with the potential for overcoming the "Chicano situation."

At the conclusion of this Prolegomena to Chicano Theology we remain within the Chicano circle, the circle of the Christian faith and within the Church. The questions which have been raised by the Chicano situation have hopefully been answered by the Christian message at least in part. Our standing within the church is a symbol of hope, for Chicano theology looks to the Church as the place where Revelation will continue to speak to our situation.

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